

JET THE WAR MULE

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AND OTHER STORIES
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY

ELLA
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DORSEY

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AND OTHER STORIES

FOR

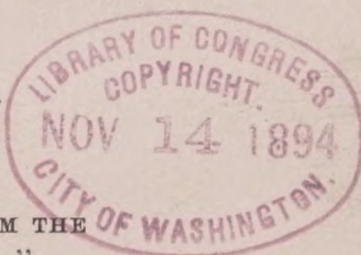
BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY

ELLA LORAIN DORSEY,

Author of "Midshipman Bob," Etc.

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DEDICATED

To every one of my dear Catholic boys and girls who is standing, or trying to stand, guard on the Line of Duty.

Heroism can be shown in small things as well as in great, by submission as well as by action; laurels can be gathered elsewhere than on the field of battle, and immortal victories won without the shock of contending armies.

So take for your motto the couplet,—

Shoot straight, never lag,
Serve God, defend the flag!

and *go in to win.*

May your first victory be that hardest one of all—victory over self! and may the prize you win be more imperishable than that yielded up by the *Jose-Maria.*

JET, THE WAR-MULE;

Or,

FIVE DAYS WITH KILPATRICK.

JET, THE WAR-MULE;

Or, Five Days with Kilpatrick.

I.

THEY were two *very* little mules to be turned out on a cold world (and that in war times, too !), but this was the way of it. When they were only a few weeks old the gun was fired from Sumter,

“ that echoed round the world ” ;

and during their colthood the two great armies of the North and South were thundering at each other across the swamps, mountains and valleys of Virginia, down the southern length of the Mississippi, and fighting among the clouds of the Tennessee ranges. The land dropped blood, the earth trembled under the tread of marching men ; the ground was cumbered with dead ; and food and forage got scarcer and scarcer in the wake of the corps

and divisions of Blue and Grey that swept back and forth as the tide of victory or defeat flowed or ebbed.

Not that this last mattered much to Ruby and Jet, for they were at that age when not even a future of plow, saddle, and harness could mar their fun or sober their spirits; and they kicked up their heels, wagged their short, round tails, flapped their ears, and ran by the side of their patient mothers, heeding little and caring less for wars and rumors of wars. Besides, *they* had plenty; for in the fertile region about Atlanta (fair jewel in Georgia's mountain crown!) abundance reigned; and, except that all the men and boys marched away, and large requisitions for corn, grain and stock came more frequently from first one Grey General and then another, peace might have made her nest in the shadow of the city's walls.

But one day there arose in the northwest a cloud as blue as an August thunder-storm. On its crest played the lightning of steel; from its swelling heart rolled the booming of artillery, and its track was marked by fierce flames that

“ burnt a hole in the night,”

as they licked and devoured store-houses, magazines, and munition-dépôts; for Sherman was marching to the sea!

Women and children fled before that mighty vanguard; for the line of march was the line of battle, and for days and weeks every dawn saw its charge and its stand, and every evening its advance and retreat, as the blue flood rolled on toward the bluer one of the Atlantic water far away.

Empty plantations were filled to overflowing one twenty-four hours, and the next deserted, and swept bare of forage, fowl, and stock. And one fine day company M, of the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry,* “scooped” the two little mules near Covington, and the first *they* knew of life’s burden was when their fat little barrels were bestrode by two dismounted troopers, whose horses had given out on the ride. They were heavy, sturdy fellows, and prodded and pricked, kicked and

* In this raid the whole of Kilpatrick’s command was engaged, supplemented and reinforced by the 7th Pennsylvania, the 4th Michigan, and the 4th “Regulars”—as the members of the standing army are called—which were detached from Garrard’s Division, on the left of Sherman’s line; but as Jet belonged to Co. M of the 7th, the fortunes of that troop will be followed rather than those of the whole command.

belabored the little mules; grumbling and swearing because their legs were quite too short, and their own quite too long. And how the regiment did laugh to see them drawn up like grasshoppers, or stubbing their toes so violently as almost to let their "mounts" walk from under them!

Well, here was "a pretty how-de-do"; and although Ruby and Jet had never heard of *Ko-ko* (much less the *Mikado*), they felt strongly that it was indeed "a state of things"; and that night over their forage, stiff, sore, bruised, they laid their ears together and consulted as to what they should do.

"I won't stand it!" snorted Ruby, with such fury that the mouthful of oats went down the wrong way. "I just won't! That heavy, two-legged brute has almost broken my back, and I know there are dents in my sides where he kicked me. I'll bolt! No"—as Jet rolled his eyes at him,—“no, there's no use talking: I *will*; and I have half a mind to break his neck before I do it, too!”

And every hair on his bright sorrel sides seemed to bristle.

Footsteps at their backs (for they were

picketed in a fence corner) interrupted them, and a tall trooper and a small, slight lad stopped by them.

"O Hansel! ain't they cute little beasts! Am I really to have one of them?"

"Yes. Siegel's horse played out to-day, and he'll have to get yours. He's too long to mount on them things. Take your pick, and hurry up your cakes, for we've got to ride in three hours. You didn't care much for that horse of yours anyway, did you?"

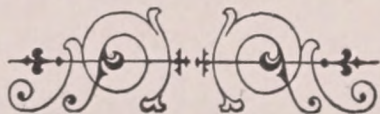
"No," said the boy. "He travels all right, but he bucks like the mischief. Why, sometimes I get all ready for the 'Flourish,' and the first thing I know he's humping up and coming down so stiff on his trotters that I feel as if my teeth were banging into my eyeballs. And I'd just like to know how anybody's going to blow with a horse acting like that."

A smile flitted over the dark, sad face of the soldier; and he watched the boy kindly as he walked from one to the other of the mules, examining them critically, patting their sides, rubbing down their noses, and handling their legs. Ruby's bright coloring seemed to catch his fancy; but Ruby was bent upon being cross, and at every approach he laid back his

ears, shook his fat barrel, and limbered up his heels as if pining for a kick. Jet, on the other hand, was so reminded of his young master, who had marched away the year before (although only fifteen), and had never come back, that he rubbed his nose against the blue shoulder, and wagged his ears and tail like a dog ; while his big, soft eyes, with their long thick lashes, looked straight into the blue ones, winking in such a funny way that the merry, boyish ha-ha ! rang out on the still night.

“Ain’t he a dandy, Hansel? I’ll take him every time.”

And Jet was led away, without ever having a chance to say what he’d do at all.



II.

“HELLO, Ned! where did you catch your Dutch canary?” one of the troop sang out, as he came up to the camp-fire with Jet.

“Settin’ on a rail, singing with Heintzelmann’s red bird,” said the youngster, at which there was a shout; for Heintzelmann was one of the dismounted troopers, and he sat nursing his wrath and his aching shins near by.

Then Oester led his new “mount” to his own corner of the worm-fence, * got him a measure of oats, and fell asleep before Jet’s nose was fairly in the sack. Toward eleven o’clock he was shaken up by Black Schwartz (as the grave, sad Thuringian was called, to distinguish him from several others of the same name in the regiment), and after half a minute of eye-rubbing, he scrambled to his feet and blew the “Mount” till he looked

* Throughout the South and in many places in the North and West these fences are in general use. They are made by piling rails “log-cabin” fashion in zigzag.

like a cathedral cherub. The earth seemed to heave as the men rose, with jingling of sabre and spur, and rattle of carbine and canteen; and in a few minutes the command was making at a sling trot for the railroad, where they hoped to cut off Hood's supplies, and so force him out of Atlanta, whose frowning works forbade assault.

Well, ahead went the little bugler, with such a light hand on the rein, knees so gently pressed on Jet's sides, and with such a friendly twist now and then at the long, smooth ears that the little mule snorted as much like a charger as he could, and made his short legs fly with such speed that he still led when the white-faced dawn stared at them out of the darkness.

Down the Sandtown road they rattled, with guidons flying, and spurs, sabre and carbine keeping up a subdued but merry trio; the men joking among themselves, and every mother's son of them pitying Garrard, whose duty kept him out of the fun.

Suddenly a yellow ribbon of a crossroad sprang into sight in the growing day, lacing the fields and cutting the pike at a clean right angle; and along that road, charging

gallantly under the "red, white and red," came the Grey-coats, yelling their war-cry, and wild for a brush. Their charge cut our line in two, and for a lively half-hour there was a rain of steel blows that filled the air with fiery sparks and flashes, and, alas! alas! sowed the field and roadway with that which was redder than poppies, more precious than fine gold—the blood of brave men in both armies fighting for what they believed to be the right cause.

And here Ruby put in his first very bad conduct. When the flank charge broke our line he was with the advance, which pushed at full speed for the railroad, fighting as it went. Their path lay through a pine wood, and a bog, whose treacherous mud was pierced by a narrow stream. Across this last was laid a foot-bridge of logs, and over it many an iron-shod charger passed in safety; but Ruby—mad, excited and scared—took it so gingerly that he was the last of Company M on its traverse. Behind were three Butter-nuts,* flushed with success, and brandishing

* A name given to the Confederates, because their homespun was colored with a dye made of butternut shells.

what looked to the frightened little beast like an arsenal of weapons, and to his rider like so many passports to a variety of southern prisons, each more awful than the other, and as they pelted along, they shouted: "Halt! Surrender!" But Heintzelmann shook his head, gave Ruby a savage prod with a pair of Mexican spurs he had mounted that morning, and laid a whistling whack along his sides with the flat of his sabre.

It was the last straw—a whole bundle of straws! Ruby gave a violent jump, bowed his back with such vigor as to burst the surcingle, and bounced into the bog; then, with an adroit wriggle, he slid from under his rider and saddle, and bolted leaving them *planté-là*, to the ringing amusement of friend and foe alike. But luck was against him evidently (as it is against most bolters from duty); for while he clattered along, free, unburdened, unspurred, and switching a viciously triumphant tail, a dismounted trooper caught his trailing bridle, vaulted on his unwilling back, and turned his reluctant head again into the thick of that hateful firing, above which flashed the sharp, sweet calls of Oester's bugle; and—once—resounded an awful bray,

given by Jet, when his feelings as a mule got the better of his dignity as a cavalry charger.

It was full day now, and the embankment was won, but only for an instant; for as our troopers rose on the crest they were enfiladed by the Grey-coats; and as Ruby's new rider brought him up to the scratch a withering fire raked the line. He didn't know anything about Shakespeare, but he felt strongly the advisability of doing quickly and at once what he thought it well to do; so he wheeled and sprang straight off of the embankment—a sheer fall of ten feet,—rolled over in the thick sand two or three times, and took up a beeline for the home!



III.

“WELL,” grumbled his astonished rider, as he scrambled to his feet, “that’s *one* way of dismounting that’s not down in the tactics, and I must say *I* don’t want to introduce it. Confound the brute! look how he skedaddles!” *

And he gazed ruefully at the rapidly-vanishing speck, so like a pincushion, with four legs waving wildly in the air.

But there was no time for comments. The Grey-coats rushed along like a sand-storm; and it was every man for himself, and then a long *detour* to join the other half of the regiment. Then came a rest? Not a bit of it! There was a pause long enough to take account of stock, catch fresh “mounts,” tighten belts, gnaw a piece of hard-tack and nibble a bit of bacon; and then it was “Forward!” till about 2 o’clock in the after-

* A word which I am assured has a pure Greek origin, and meaning in army circles to run.

noon, when the advance-guard of the 7th collided with the advance-guard of the enemy—massed in the woods—to beat them back from Jonesborough, where enormous supplies were stored, and where the first serious blow of the raid was to be struck.

As the first shot began to fall, like the heavy advance-drops of a summer rain, Hartmann suddenly turned to his right-hand neighbor and said, abruptly (of all things in the world):

“I thought there were mocking-birds singing all around in the South.”

“Mocking-birds, is it?” echoed the rollicking Irishman. “Well, maybe. But—glory to God!—it’s the blackbirds ye’ll hear sing this day. Listen to ’em whistle. Good-afternoon to ye!” he said, doffing his cap, and bobbing his close-cropped head politely, as the minie and rifle balls whizzed past.

“Hello, Ainsworth!” he shouted to a young soldier in Company L—a guidon—who sat looking anxiously, but fearlessly, ahead. “What’s the matter? Ye look as solemn as if the fight was off. But be easy, my boy, and cheer up; for there’s lashin’s of ‘Johnnies’ ahead. Whoop!”

And he bounced in his saddle, his eyes dancing and his mouth one broad grin ; for O'Keefe would rather fight than eat his dinner any day.

"All right," said Ainsworth, and a laugh chased the gravity from his face for a moment ; then, as the regimental bugler—a swarthy Indian, with streaming elf-locks and wolfish eyes—raised his bugle toward his lips, he ranged up to Oester, laid his hand on the peak of the boy's saddle and spoke earnestly to him for a few moments, handing him a small package as he did so, and then rode off, leading his squad.

Oester looked puzzled ; and O'Keefe, as he came abreast him, said :

"A good boy, that Ainsworth ; but did ye ever see such a solemn face? Looks for all the world as if he was making his will, and leaving his money to relations he didn't like, *ava*."

"Now," answered the boy, "that's downright queer, O'Keefe. It's just about what he has been doing—making his will, I mean. He says he's going to be shot in this charge, that he'll be hit right here" (touching his forehead) ; "that he'll be killed outright, and

maybe we'll miss his body in the confusion ; and as he wants his mother to have all his valuables and this, he's given 'em to me to give to the Colonel. If I get bowled over—"

"Oh, shut up !" said O'Keefe, brusquely ; for he liked the boy, and—a true Celt—he was disagreeably impressed by a forecasting.

"Don't you think maybe there *is* something in it ?" asked the lad, his candid blue eyes thoughtfully raised to the pugnacious face, just now puckered with passing annoyance.

"No ; I don't that ! Ye are both goin' to live to be killed a dozen times over—"

"Tarantara-tara-tara !" suddenly rang the "charge" on ahead. Oester's bugle caught it up and sent it flying along the line ; and the blue wave gathered, rolled, and broke against the barricade of rails, underbrush and felled timber, behind which crouched the fiery Death. It was clatter and rush, crash of rider and steed, shock of steel, and fall of horse and man. Then the barricade was carried, and Kilpatrick and his men went streaming down the river-bank to meet—flames !

The Grey-coats had fired the bridge ; and as they vanished in the trees beyond, the

shriek of shells began to pierce the air, and a mighty bad twenty minutes our men put in ; for the Grey cannoneers had an uncommonly neat idea of a range, and grape and canister did awful work. But there was no loitering or seeking for shelter ; for while one detachment put out the fire, another cut, dressed and hauled logs, and still another began to repair the old bridge, and lay a new one on the few pontoons the command had with them.

During the rush O'Keefe was here, there, and everywhere (of course), expending the strength of ten men, and doing the work of half a one ; and once, as he passed Hartmann, he shouted :

“How d'ye like these mocking-birds, me boy ! And isn't it good lungs they've got and sweet voices ? D'ye mind the neat little rhyme the childer say to the star ? We'll be givin' it a new turn, I'm thinkin' :

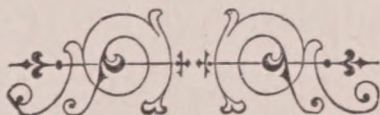
“Twinkle, twinkle, little shell,
How I hate to hear ye yell !
To my head ye're quite too nigh.
I wish ye'd stay up in the sky.'”

And on he rode, with a laugh that was a tonic, and was among the first of the com-

mand that rushed into the teeth of the shell-ing batteries, with a shout that presaged victory.

But back yonder among the torn turf, the trampled shrubbery and the wreck of the scattered barricade, with his face turned skyward and a smile on his quiet lips, lay Ainsworth dead his forehead pierced by the bullet he had ridden out to meet.*

* This presentiment and death are true incidents.



IV.

THROUGH the long afternoon the fight ran its length, but every hour brought our men nearer their objective point, and at 7 o'clock the Stars and Stripes swept into the little town of Jonesborough. Detachments were told off to fire the store, but the majority of the tired men rolled from their horses, many of them falling asleep instantly, others smoking, others tying up "barked" legs and arms, others chewing their quids and "swearing strange oaths" as they fought the day over; and the regimental cooks boiled coffee and made savory messes of pork, hard-tack, and beans flavored with gunpowder—which, by the way, is a very fair substitute for salt when you can't do any better. It was up to a group thus clustered about one of these kettles that Oester trotted, slipping off his little black steed to give him a moment of much-needed rest.

"Where's Schwartz?" he asked excitedly.

"What Schwartz?" answered Skelton lazily, as he stirred his loblolly with a stick. "If it's Towhead, yonder he lies"—pointing to a young soldier, whose close-curling blonde hair, white forehead, and peaceful, sleeping figure contrasted strongly with his sunburnt—*sun-blistered*—features (which were grimed with powder), and his torn, stained uniform. "If it's the Grey-Rat, yonder *he* is"—waving the dripping stick toward a fierce-eyed, shock-headed, elderly man, who came toward them, bending under a load of forage. "If it's—"

"No, no!" said the boy, stamping in his eagerness; "I mean Black Schwartz."

"Oh, him!" said Skelton, gravely. "I ain't seen him since the last brush out yonder, and I think likely he's there somewheres."

"Killed!" exclaimed Oester, with quivering lips. "Don't say that, Skelton; don't!"

"Well, but what else *can* I say?"—Skelton was literal.—"If he hadn't been, he'd have been in long ago."

"Maybe he's only wounded. I'm going out to see."

"Yes, and be gobbled up by the Johnnies for a fool!" growled Skelton, returning to

his stew. "You never can tell *where* them chaps'll turn up. There's one thing you can bet on, though; and that is, you'll find 'em when you don't want 'em, and where you don't expect 'em. Besides lookin' for a wounded man in this here light is crazier than huntin' needles in a haystack."

But the boy had braced his belt, looked to his saddle-straps, and was off long before his friend had finished.

"Well," gasped Skelton, "of all the young idjits ever *I* see! A *pair* of mules as beats creation!"

But the canny little beast and his anxious young rider were winding in and out the underbrush, warily, keeping a bright lookout for the enemy that didn't come, and stumbling at last upon the object of their search, who sat leaning against a tree, one bony hand twisted in the grass, its fingers clutching at the earth in agony; the other pressed to his breast, over a red spot that spread and spread on the blue coat.

"O Hansel! I am so glad I've found you!" cried the boy. "We've come out to take you into the lines, haven't we, Jet?" And Jet wagged his ears, and pawed with his slender

hoofs, as if eager to do his half of the labor of love, although he ached smartly from tip to tail.

Schwartz smiled half tenderly, half sadly. "No, lad: I've got my discharge. Death's white horse is the one I'll ride to-night."

"What do you mean, Hansel? Oh! you ain't as much hurt as that! It's—it's—such a little place!"

"Big enough for my soul to slip through."

The tears sprang to Oester's blue eyes, and a lump rose in his throat. "You mustn't die—you sha'n't die! Let me go back for the doctor. He'll be sure to patch you up."

"No: stay here. It won't be long; it's better so. I'm *glad*. Ilse and the child are there, and it's been long to wait."

"But, Hansel, dear Hansel, I *must* do something for you. Isn't there *anything* you want? It's awful to be doing nothing!" And he sobbed openly, too grieved even to try to hide it.

"Scratch a hole in the ground for me if you can, and cover me away from the buzzards. Put this in my hands. Keep the medal for yourself. I wish to God I could have the Sacraments! It's an awful thing to

go red-handed before His face. ‘*Heilige, Maria, bitte für uns!*’ ”

“This” was a rosary, black, well-worn, and shining.

“Read the prayer on the medal as often as you can. Promise”—and the nervous fingers clutched his hand. “And say a ‘Hail Mary’ for me every day. It’ll do you good, and God knows how it will help me!”

“I will! I will!” cried the boy. “But I don’t know the last one. Say it once, and I’ll try to remember.”

And Schwartz gasped out the dear prayer, the blood spurting between like pulse-beats. Then his voice died away, and he lay back, with strange, grey shadows creeping under his eyes and around his mouth. Once he opened his heavy lids, and looked with startled gaze at the red glare that stained the night like a gaping wound.

“Morning! Why doesn’t the boy sound the *reveillé*? The night is over—the night is over and gone. Death—what is it? Death is swallowed up in victory. A victory? Is it blood I see creeping up and spreading like a lake?”

“It’s the fire in the town back there,

Hansel. They're burning up the stores."

"Fire! What fire?—Ah! I know: the fire of the red dawn, when men shall be judged—

"In the red dawn
Of the Judgment morn,
Mary, remember me.'"

Then muttering, "Christ of the Cross, forgive!" his voice again sank into silence.

The minutes hurried by, and the shy, wild things of the forest began to peep out; a snake or two trailed its bronze length past, and here and there a crippled bird cried into the night. Suddenly Schwartz sat erect. "Here!" he answered to some inaudible roll-call, and—was dead.

For a few minutes the boy sat stunned. It was all so different from a death on the field, with the music of the charge cutting sweet and shrill through the rattle of musketry and roar of artillery, the mad hurraing of the men, and the rush of half-frantic horses.

Then Jet, who had watched him uneasily, came and took him by the jacket sleeve, and gently pulled it once or twice. Oester looked up, and, throwing his arms around the little mule's neck, cried: "O Jet! I *did* love him! Poor, poor fellow!"

But the haste and stress of war were on him ; and, with the speed so horrible where we love, he began to dig his friend's grave, tearing up the turf and soft mould with the dead man's sabre, and digging with his tin plate and hands. Then he laid him in the shallow, rudely-hollowed trench ; and, racked and shaken by the struggle, fell on his knees to cover up the kind face, with its open eyes and yet warm cheeks.

How long he crouched there he did not know, but heavy wings beat the air above him, and slowly circling nearer and nearer drew a buzzard—vilest of birds—its raw, red neck eagerly stretched, its harsh cry filling the spot with unseemly clamor.

This decided him ; and hastily catching up the softest patch of moss he could find, he laid it (earth out) on the dead face, filled in the grave, and, in a sudden flash of wrath and grief, shot the bird with Schwartz's carbine as he hurried away.

V.

AS Oester and Jet stumbled back to the lines, depressed and exhausted, a great cheering and shouting arose, mingled with the strains of brass and silver, the short bark of bass drums, and the clash of cymbals.

And what were the bands playing?

Why, from the Grey camp floated the notes of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which the loyal Blue applauded to the echo (roaring the chorus until the forest trembled), and to which they responded by the rollicking strains of "Dixie." Then the Grey camp lifted up its voice in a deep-throated roar of applause; and when that subsided their bandsmen blew back "The Red, White and Blue," which was answered by "Maryland, My Maryland!" and so on, with sometimes mingled choruses that came from neither Yankees nor Rebels, but from the brave hearts of American men glorying in one another's bravery, and ready to snatch the

red rose of national pride from the bloody field of the day just past and the day yet to come—also ready to pitch in and whack one another soundly as soon as the occasion offered. *

Louder grew the songs and higher burnt the flames till midnight, when the one died to echoes and the other to ashes; and “Boots and Saddles!” “Mount!” and “Forward!” followed in rapid succession; and before the new day was half an hour old the command was tearing at full gallop toward Lovejoy Station. Like young Loch-invar,

“They stopped not for brake,
They stayed not for stone;
They swam (every) river
Where ford there was none.”

And what a ride was that! The equinox was on, and the storm had burst about one o'clock. The water fell in solid sheets, and every “creek,” “run,” and “branch” on the route lifted up a threatening voice as it dashed, swollen and turbid, through its narrow stony bed. The trees groaned and bent in the wind, and tossed wet, spiteful branches

* This beautiful and graceful incident is strictly true, as are all our citations of military movements.

in the faces of the riders, sometimes giving ugly blows; for the blackness was Egyptian, and time was too precious to pick the way. There it was that Jet and his master got full benefit of their small stature and light weight; for the wee beast ran under the hanging boughs, Oester lying low on his neck; and as they raced along both were too plucky to notice the sharp, scoring scratches given by blackberry, raspberry and cat-vines.

It was a sorry-looking command when the day broke—sodden, bareheaded, cut and bruised, haggard with want of sleep, pale with fatigue, and many a good uniform looking like the “rags and jags” worn by the beggars that come to town in Mother Goose’s ballad.

“Rents, is it?” said O’Keefe, with his jolly laugh. “Well, then, *I* should be callin’ ’em *rack-rents!*”

But the men were in high spirits, and when the bugles called “Halt!” they hardly waited for the steaming black coffee that their wise young commander gave them time to make and take. It had its effect, though; and horses and riders found that courage and patriotism are never the worse for a judicious

mixture therewith of forage and rations, and the pace was decidedly mended after the brief rest.

As the column thundered down the high-road, Oester thought of his promise to Black Schwartz ; and, being a boy of his word, he took out the medal to look at it and read the prayer. On its oval he saw a woman's figure with outstretched hands, and ellipse of stars about her (like the statue of Our Lady at Notre Dame), a globe-segment under her feet, and crushed thereon a serpent. Outside the stars ran the words: "O Mary! conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

As he looked at it, Denbigh—a rough-and-ready fellow—sang out: "What you got there, younker?"

"A medal Schwartz gave me."

"What sort of a medal? Let's look."

But the boy, from some instinct, put it in his breast saying: "Some sort of religious medal, I think."

"Religious? Bah, I thought so! That Schwartz was the biggest sneak I ever saw—a Catholic he called himself, but I know the breed—liars and hypocrites every one of 'em;

chockful of superstitions, too ; a low, priest-ridden lot, with a carpenter's Son for a God, and a fisherman for the head of their Church."

"Hallow there !" said O'Keefe. "What's all that? Who is it that are liars, and priest-ridden, and idolaters into the bargain?"

Oester's face was scarlet. "I don't know anything about Catholics," he said; "but I tell you Schwartz was one of the best men I ever saw. He hadn't a low grain in his body, and was the most truthful man in the world. *You* are the liar and sneak, Denbigh, and a coward too, to fling out like that at a dead man that can't fight for himself."

Denbigh's coarse face grew purple, and he struck at the boy furiously. "You young hound !" he snarled ; "I'll give you the best tanning you ever got, the first chance I have."

But O'Keefe, with his hat set jauntily on one side, his right fist poised daintily on his hip, and with a gleam in his Irish eyes, said : "Leave the kid, and listen to me, my boy. Will ye have the goodness to repeat that little speech of yours, and answer me question, if you please?"

But Denbigh, knowing the weight of O'Keefe's arm, and not in the least deceived by his genial smile, muttered an ugly word, and sullenly looked straight ahead.

"Do now," continued the Irishman persuasively; "*do*. It will be safer, for ye seem to have a poor circulation the morn. Your face is as purple as a plum, and I'm thinkin' you'll be havin' a fit or something, if you cork your feelings up so sudden. And I tell you"—his anger flashing out—"I'm achin' to give you a warmin' that you'll remember to your dyin' hour, you ill-conditioned brute!—yappin at good and holy things, for all the world like a mad-dog bayin' at the moon!"

"Silence in the ranks there!" said the sergeant, and O'Keefe had to carry on his contention by looks, which he did *con amore* in a series of darting glances sharp as stilettos, and highly exasperating to their object.

At his first chance he asked Oester what was the row, and when the boy told him he said: "And so he is dead! Well, God rest his soul, and give me grace to die as well! And he left you the medal?"

* "Yes, and what does that saying mean?"

“It means that Mary, the great Mother of God” (and the cap was reverently lifted from the bullet head), “was never touched with sin, but was born free from the curse of Adam.”

“How do you know it?” and the blue eyes looked searchingly into the grey.

“Know it? For one thing, me Church teaches it, and the Church of God don’t lie; and for another, me common sense tells me it has to be so.”

“*My* common sense don’t,” struck in Beltzhooover, whom a shift in formation had brought alongside.

“Don’t it now?” said O’Keefe, admiringly. “Well, your parsons do be sayin’, ‘The age of miracles is past.’ But try and stretch your wool-sack enough to sense this: It would have been mighty unbecomin’ and unnatural for God to have let His Blessed Mother be for a minute in the grip of the ould devil, as She would have been if She’d had original sin. Why, man, He *loved* Her; don’t you know that? Think what that means, if you have a mother yourself, and then size up what the Lord could feel.”

“Oh, come now!” said Beltzhooover, looking rather startled, “that’s downright blas-

phemy to talk in that free-and-easy way about the Lord, as if He was just folks."

"It ain't either!" retorted O'Keefe; "for He was true God and true Man. But"—he broke off—"what's that now?" as the commanding notes of the "Halt" sprang from bugle to bugle, and the line pulled up, with a great ringing of spurs and accoutrements, and much stamping of horses.

"D'you see any Grey-backs?" he called out to Oester.

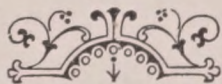
The boy shook his head, then said: "But there's something ahead there in the woods. By George!" he added, in sudden excitement, "I tell you that chap had better get out of the way"—waving his bugle toward a slender, plainly-dressed young man, who rode leisurely along, skirting the trees, trotting from point to point, and taking an exhaustive survey of the situation. "The first thing he knows he'll be nowhere. Who is the little fool, anyway?" he asked impatiently.

O'Keefe's answer was a shout: "Ain't that a good one now? 'The little fool'! Why, it's 'Kil' [Kilpatrick] himself!"

"The General! He looks like a boy, and hasn't enough gold lace to—"

“Dress out a second lieutenant? That’s him to a T. No fuss, no feathers, no blather-skiting. Ah! he’s the boy! It’s never ‘Go!’ with Kil; it’s always ‘Come on, boys!’ and him ahead in the thick of the *shindig*. That’s for the advance. When it’s retreating we are, that’s another story; *then* he’s the last man— Dismount, is it?”—as the familiar notes flew into the air like a flock of birds startled by a hunter. “With all the pleasure in life. A fourth man? * Who said that? It’s him that lied, then; for into this fight I’m goin’.” And he dexterously pushed in between the two men ahead of him, tossed his bridle to the nearest, and was yards away in a twinkling.

* In ordinary cases, when cavalry is dismounted for fighting on foot, every fourth man is detailed to stay in the rear and hold the riderless horses; when it is desired to engage the majority of the force, every seventh man is so detailed.



VI.

THAT *was* a day, and grey indeed must be the head (grey even with the ashes of oblivion) and cold the heart that does not recall its dash, its triumph, its rout, its valor, its glorious ending.

When the 7th pushed forward afoot, Lovejoy was only separated from it by a belt of forest. Beyond these trees lay the railroad, and the destruction of that railroad meant fulfilling the object of the raid, and opening the gate to the sea. So it was with light hearts and a joyous shout that the 7th and its companion regiments pelted down the slope, and—into the arms of the enemy.

Under the shadow of the great oaks the Grey line sprang into sight and life, and a leaden hail pattered through the grove, bullets finding billets in the trunks of men and trees alike. But the Blue line advanced steadily through it, their seven-barrelled Spencers (carbines) belching out such irresistible arguments

that the Grey horse (for the Confederate advance was mounted) drew off—but slowly, and contesting every foot of the way,—and finally swept over the railroad track, beyond which they again made a stand.

At the sight of the track, “the main artery of Atlanta,” strained muscles limbered, tired backs dropped their fatigue, stiff legs grew flexible, and at a double quick our boys charged on it, tearing it up and scattering it far and wide.

But, oh! dear, such a surprise party as they had! The night before, by the light of the burning stores at Jonesborough, dashing Pat Claiburn and his veterans poured out of Atlanta; and hardly had the boys in Blue been five minutes at the work, when he pounced upon them, and in all too short a time was driving them back in a confused mass toward the main-road.

Helter-skelter they went, and, bursting through the trees, nearly stamped the lead-horses; while Kilpatrick stormed up and down the line of retreat, trying to stop the rout, and the wild yell of the Grey-coats made the very air pulsate.

With loss of breath came return of common

sense, and with that a halting, and an attempt to stand and re-form. And as the Chicago Board of Trade Battery swung around to the front, wheeling its glittering pieces through the green corn that bordered the main-road, and quietly beginning to unlimber and load in the very teeth of the enemy, every man felt it was giving him the chance he wanted to "up and at 'em again."

From the six bonnie guns of the Illinois men grape and canister began to fly, and the corn was reaped with a sickle whose edge was flame and whose stroke was death; but the Grey-coats threw themselves against the wall of fire again and again, until their ranks were plowed with lines of blood. Then there was a pause in the attack, and our boys, having shaken themselves out of the tangle and coil of the semi-stampede, began a struggle for some form of regimental formation; the officers meantime holding a hasty council as to what answer should be returned to the summons to surrender sent in by Clairburn with a flag of truce.

Some of them advised for it, because the Grey line curved like a crescent about the Blue, its horns drawing closer and closer; it

was an enemy's country they were in, and honorable terms were offered. But Kilpatrick was dead against it, and, as the majority went with him, the white flag fluttered back.

As quick a thinker as he was a charger, the young general had planned his cutting out before the Grey messenger had reached his commanding officer with his refusal. The men were deployed in an open field some three hundred yards back; every eighth man was told off to hold seven horses, and orders were given to dismount and charge on foot. But as the line formed, an eldritch screech rent the air, and sharpnel began to drop in the ranks. Two batteries had opened in the *rear*. Our boys were sandwiched, outflanked, surrounded!

A second council was held. To cut through was now imperative, and Colonel Minty* volunteered to lead the charge. Kilpatrick's grey eyes blazed; *here* was a man after his own heart! A few hasty words were exchanged, and the brigade was ordered into the field of broom-corn that stretched to the right, glistening in the sunshine, and tossing its

* Of the 4th Michigan, the regiment that afterward captured Jefferson Davis.

brown tassels haughtily as the horses thrust in among its towering stalks (it stood nine or ten feet high).

In a few minutes the troops were in position, and every man took his horse in a firmer grip between his knees, and every heart beat as the dismounted troopers* marched forward, and began to throw down the panels of the fence to clear the way for the charge.

Ahead was an open field, gashed and cut into gullies by the wash-outs of years; over it the shells were shrieking and bursting, and beyond it was a barricade of rails and earth, behind which were a force of dismounted cavalry and a battery, the latter trained so as to sweep the plain in a bee-line† with our troops. A flourish of trumpets announced "ready," and Kilpatrick, seizing his Division flag,‡

* Every fourth man this time. These had to watch their chance as the charge rushed by, and grab at their horses, mounting on the gallop.

† In the South—and I suppose elsewhere—when bees have gathered their allotment of honey, they take up a line so straight and direct for their hives that the people use the expression "bee-line" to indicate the shortest route to a given place.

‡ This flag, I am told, was presented to him by his wife; he loved it next to the honor of his Division, and guarded both with equal care.

ordered the "charge," and rushed forward like a thunderbolt.

From the broom-corn came a dazzling flash as the sabres were drawn and tossed aloft, and there was a noise

"like the rushing of a mighty wind";

and the corn lay low as the command, with resounding throats and an awful sound of trampling hoofs, stretched at full gallop after him.

What a fight it was! The two lines crashed together with a shock audible above the roar of the cannon, and plunged and swayed like St. George's dragon, the Grey melting into the Blue, the Blue wedging into the Grey; small detached groups drifted "hither and yon," fighting like wildcats, with clubbed carbines, bare hands, or sabres that shore brain-pans and lopped off sword-arms, to the accompaniment of savage shouts or grim silence, according to the deadliness of struggle; and the uproar of bursting shells and the death-scream of rider and horse, as grape and canister replaced the shells and began to scatter ruin in their path, made it something to remember

“Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment book unfold,”

as the Bedouin song puts it.

It was a crucial time for Jet and his master—especially Jet; for he saw at this juncture a sight so appalling to him that he *nearly* forgot his duty, and *quite* lost the stiffness of his upper lip for several minutes.

Trotting hard after the charging men came the camp-mules and the ambulances (for it was *sauve qui peut*, and no “safety in the rear,”—in fact, there wasn’t any rear to speak of); and one of the former, a veteran named “Tommy,” was leading the way with his accustomed dignity and indifference to danger. On his back were eight large camp-kettles, and hanging from these were coffee-pots and “spiders” *ad libitum*.

About midway the field, a shell came howling along, with a voice so particularly awful that he halted a second, looked up, and shook his head—was it instinct?—and just as he looked down again it fell right on top of the highest kettle.

There was a sound like the bursting of a nine-inch gun, an appalling scattering of iron

fragments, hoofs, and coffee-pots ; and then Jet shut his eyes and quaked like a mound of jelly. He might have rolled over but for Oester's cry of dismay, and the sudden blowing of the call to "church."

"Church!" It wasn't Sunday, no chapels were handy; and, although Jet was not up to *every* cavalry eccentricity, he felt pretty sure no one would try "open-air service" in a mess like this ; but there was the call, and crowding on its echoing notes came the most stirring call of all : "To the colors ! to the colors ! taran — tara — tara — tara !" Then there was a fresh burst of speed from a squad of men, a mad whirling around the regimental flag, and a cheering that roused his curiosity in spite of the sinking sensation that ran through his barrel and quivered in his hamstrings.

What had happened was this : the color-bearer, in his eagerness to reach the barricade, had got so far ahead that a squad of Grey-coats had swarmed out and were doing their level best to tear him from his horse, and so pluck the flag away from him. His hat was off, his eyes half blinded by the blood from a cut across his head ; and when Oester

spied him he was clinging to the colors might and main, with arm, hand, leg, and teeth, and was fighting like mad. The boy's heart seemed to stand for an instant, and then the blood flashed through his veins like fire. What should he do ?

The biggest man in the regiment was the Sergeant-Major — Hamilton Church ; he was a stern disciplinarian, and Oester knew that in the very act of dying he would resent any deviation from routine or discipline—hence his musical pun, or play on the name. Sure enough, as the call reached his ears, Church turned with a black frown, and saw the little bugler's arm waving like a wind-mill toward the color-bearer ; at the same instant "To the colors !" tore through the air, and in a few minutes he was off to the rescue with a squad at his back. And none too soon ; for the bearer's sword-arm was severed, a bullet entered his breast, and as Church snatched at the drooping staff the youth fell dead, with a smile on his beardless lips, and a flash of joy in his dying eyes that held Death's film at bay.

It all did not take five minutes, and happened while the Blue line was still rolling down on the barricade.

When the Bunker-Hill range was reached (that is, when the opponents could see the color of one another's eyes), the Grey cannoneers gave a last broadside, threw down their rammers, sponges and ammunition, and fled. All except one man, a young Lieutenant*—a mere boy,—who stood by his gun, loading and firing with a courage so superb, a coolness so admirable, that Minty's command "to spare his life, for a man like that was too brave to lose," did not need to be repeated to our men, who cheered him enthusiastically, even as they spiked the piece he had served so grandly.†

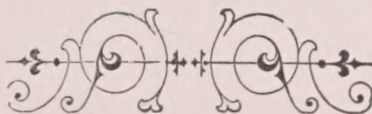
"Ah!" thought Jet, as he wheezed along, "Ruby was wiser, I'm afraid. Here he is safe at home, and I'm in a whirlpool of destruction. I don't like it—I hate it, in fact; and I believe I—I wonder if I *am* going to bolt?" for the heart of the little mule was as water within him.

* I have never been able to learn his name, and would feel grateful to any of my readers who could give it.

† A similar gallant act was done by Lieutenant Van Pelt, of Loomis' Battery (Michigan), at Chickamauga; and a similar command was given by the Confederate commander, but the gallant youth was killed by a stray shot before he could be captured.

But as the breathless rush subsided somewhat, a boyish hand was run down his streaming neck, and two boyish lips whispered in his long ears: "You darling! There isn't a horse in the troop can beat you. And Kil himself ain't pluckier."

Well, after that he just made up his mind he'd go until he dropped; and, unless his legs actually and uncontrollably ran away with him, he would stay with Company M, no matter *what* happened. And I can tell you that, after such an experience, that was being a hero indeed.



VII.

AS the Blue horse swarmed in over the breastworks, spiking and dismounting the guns, the Greys threw down their arms, and tossed up their hands in token of surrender; but prisoners were the last thing our boys wanted, their one object being to break through that narrow circle Pat Clairburn's generalship had drawn about them, so they held their headlong course. Seeing this, the Grey-coats quickly picked up their muskets, rifles, and carbines, and began potting them from the rear,—a little game they kept up with spirit and enjoyment, until a charge at *their* backs of the Ohio Brigade diverted their attention in a way at once forcible and unpleasant.

And now the field of battle presented a spectacle very like a famous picture of France and England comparing notes on the Franco-

Chinese and the Anglo-Egyptian campaigns.* Our boys were bursting through the network, the first line of Greys being in full retreat ahead of them; behind this (*our* first line) chased the enemy's second line hotly, which, in turn, was flying before the onslaught of the men of "La Belle Rivière";† and finally the latter were being peppered in the back by a third pursuing body of shouting "Butternuts."

It was an American edition of the Battle of Killiecrankie, where

"We ran, and they ran,
And we a' ran together."

And as the 7th pounded along, O'Keefe the irrepressible jerked out: "Glory to God! we are just like the black draughts ould Sawbones used to give me in me youth, on Shannon's shore—to be well shaken before taken. The first we are, and the second I'm thinkin' we are goin' to be; bad luck to the

* I mean the picture in which they are watching alternate platoons of Gauls and pig-tailed Tartans running in a close chase round a circle on one side, while the Mahdi's men and the English helmets are doing the same on the other; the lion meantime fainting from fatigue, and the eagle lying on its back exhausted, with its claws in the air.

† The name given the Ohio by the early French explorers.

Johnnies! Get up there, you lead-heeled screw!" he shouted to his horse. But as the straining beast plunged along, a ball struck him, and O'Keefe came a cropper that broke the thread of his discourse pretty smartly.

Not for long, however; for as he puffed after the command, together with dozens of other dismounted troopers (the fire just here was peculiarly fatal to the horses), a raw recruit, whirled out of his place and his wits by the shifting fortunes of the day, hailed him:

"Say, you! What regiment do you belong to?"

"Well," he answered, with a twinkle, "I *started* in the 7th Pennsylvania horse; but, begad, I've ended in the Irish foot!"

Then he grinned at the unsuspecting lout; and would have teased him further, but a riderless horse galloped by at the moment, and seizing the opportunity—as well as the bridle—he sprang into the saddle, and with a joyous whoop was skimming after his comrades, when his own name shouted in an awful voice made him pull up.

"O'Keefe, help me out, if you're a man!"

And there lay Denbigh, his face livid, his

eyes rolling like a madman's, the veins standing high on his forehead and his one free hand. His horse had rolled on him as it fell dying, and he was pinned down where the rush was thickest. His hat was off and trampled, one cheek was cut open, and hoof-marks were perilously near his head.

"Save you, is it?" said O'Keefe. "Why, man, I can hardly save myself!"

"Save me," repeated Denbigh, the foam standing on his lips. "Don't leave me here. I can't stay to be trampled to death—I won't!" And he struggled frantically.

"Look here," said O'Keefe—and not unreasonably—"I couldn't move that horse off you by myself, and if I stopped to pry him up, the Johnnies would bag us both. *I* don't want to be a prisoner any more than you do. Have some backbone about you. I'm sorry for you, but it's the luck of war." And he started on, for the wild yell—the war-cry of the Grey—sounded uncomfortably near.

"Curse you!" screamed Denbigh, with a string of appalling oaths. "I knew how it would be. You Catholics are all alike—prating and whining all the time about being better than any other people, and then, when

it comes to the pinch, doing nothing. Curse you, I say, and your God and your—”

“Hush up!” roared O’Keefe, reining in so sharply that his horse reared upright. “I’ve a mind to shoot you as you lay there, you vermin! D’you suppose such as me can be one of the holy ones of the Church? D’you think I’m up to bein’ a mirror of piety, and a shinin’ example of grace? Well, now, I just ain’t, I can tell you. But there’s this to it. They do say the devils go down before the Lord, and this devil that’s grippin’ me throat, and tellin’ me to let you die in your tracks, is goin’ down, for His honor and His Blessed Mother’s, if it costs me me life ten times over. D’you hear?”

And he wheeled about and threw himself off at Denbigh’s side.

The latter burst into a torrent of thanks, which O’Keefe interrupted violently with:

“Don’t talk to *me!* If you say a word I’ll leave you; for I’m that mad with your doin’s and sayin’s I’m most burstin’. You’re about as pleasin’ to me eyes as a yellow ribbon on St. Patrick’s Day; and if it wasn’t for one thing you might die in your ditch. And that is—you’ll please to remember it, too, when

your goin' to defame holy things, and sling mud at the Church—I'm savin' your life and givin' you liberty at the price of me own, for the sake of the 'Carpenter's Son' (d'you mind?), of the 'Fisherman Peter' (and that?), and for the sake of Mary Most Holy."

Roughly expressed, by a rude trooper in whose breast the Old Adam was on the rampage; but the man's intention was as simply and purely the honor and glory of Him he served, and the Mother he loved, as if it sprang from the soul of a saint.

Then, with a heave of his sturdy back, he managed to shove aside the dead horse enough for Denbigh to crawl out, helped him mount, saw him ride towards the vanishing line; and, as he braced himself for a run, was seized by an advance squad of Grey, hurried to the rear, and one week after was in Andersonville.



VIII.

MEANTIME our troops burst through woods and stampeded the lead-horses of the enemy, casting loose such of their own as were foundered, and mounting the blooded racers, whose clean limbs and long reach carried them just as swiftly and impartially as they had carried their owners a few hours before. The others they turned adrift, and bolted ahead. And as they went, Oester, who was blowing his heart into the inspiriting "Forward!" suddenly threw up his arms, his bugle fell in a flashing curve, and he himself swerved from the saddle, going down into the very thick of the iron-shod storm that rolled its death and valor westward from the field.

The next thing he knew he was being dragged along, head and heels together, at a rate intolerable in his pain; and a stinging agony in his back made him squirm around to see what was the motive power.

It was Jet ! He had seen his young master fall, and knew how impossible it was to stop; for he felt the irresistible stress of the advance on his quarters; but to leave the limp, boyish figure was more impossible; and the wise little mule dropped his head, grabbed Oester by the waist band (he didn't know, poor fellow! that in his anxiety he had grabbed a mouthful of flesh too), and made off with a flank movement that kept him on the edge of the column, and saved his life as well as Oester's. For under ordinary circumstances the stumbling beastie would have been ridden down or shot as a hindrance; but when the men saw what he was trying to do, they turned out when it was possible, and when it wasn't, reined in, so as to make the shock of collision as light as might be, cheering him meantime with voice and word: "Go it, Blackie !" "Good for you, I say !" "Hi there, Jet !" "Hurrah for the little contraband !" and so on.

However, in spite of all this, hampered as he was, he fell behind steadily; and there is little doubt as to what would have happened (for the 7th was ahead, and to the other regiments one bugler more or less "would not

count in the news of the battle”), had not the boy recovered consciousness, and managed to mount.

He was too dizzy and faint to sit up, and as he lay over on Jet’s neck he spit out mouthfuls of blood, and time and again thought the world was reeling away into chaos. Then, too, there was such a strange refrain in his head, shaping itself to the time of the hoof-beats: “. . . now and at the hour of our death;” now and at the hour of our death.

Where had he heard it? He couldn’t think. Well, it seemed to fit; for he believed now *was* the hour of death.

Who was saying, “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners”? It couldn’t be Schwartz, for he was dead, and—why, he was saying it himself! “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. . . . Hail, full of grace! blessed art Thou among women—Friend of the friendless—Refuge of sinners—Health of the sick—who had said *these* things? Like a flock of starlings a crowd of soldier faces started out of the mists that blinded him, and there came a glimpse of a

tent, in which stood a man in strangely shaped garments, that glittered, and had a great cross on the back. That was last year. Yes, and then: "There stood by the Cross Mary, His Mother. . . . She saw Him die—Her Son, Her God; and to His love She added the anguish of Her sinless Heart. . . . The Blood of Christ and the tears of Mary—that is what your souls were worth to Our Lord and His Mother. . . . 'Behold the Mother'—thy *Mother!*"

There it was again. A Mother who loved and pitied and prayed. Why had nobody ever told him about *Her* before, so he could have loved Her long ago? And—what was that white thing fluttering in the wind? "Without spot or stain, pray for us, who have recourse to thee." That wasn't quite right as to the words, but She, the Mother of God, was the one Schwartz's medal said was without sin. Where *was* his medal? And in quick alarm he grasped for it. Ah, that agony! "And a sword shall pierce—" But the darkness he had been struggling against closed in on him, and he fell—thanks to God and Our Lady—at the side, *not* under

the wheels, of the ambulance, whose white cover he had sighted just before.

"Is he dead?" asked the young surgeon in charge.

"Think not, sir," said his steward.

"Up with him, then. Here, let's see if he's badly hit. Jove!" he added, under his breath, "that was a narrow shave! Here, Saunders, look at this."

"Yes, sir," replied the soldier; "that often happens among the Romanists."

For the medal of Our Lady had caught the ball on its disk, and the flattened lead fell from the boy's shirt as Doctor Harding opened it. Under the medal and all around it the flesh was discolored and contused, but not a scratch or break marred the young body.

"What's that you're saying?" asked the Doctor, sharply.

"I said, sir, that often happens among the Romanists; they most all wear medals, and dozens of 'em git saved just that way."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Doctor, impatiently; "anything else would do it just as well."

"Then why don't it, sir?" asked Saunders, not unnaturally. "You see, Doctor," he went

on, confidentially, "I used to think just like you do, but a man sees a sight of things when he's on hospital duty. And about these here medals (*I* used to call 'em 'charms,' and many's the time I've wondered what Cotton Mather and John Knox would 'a done with them fellows, the way they take on about the Virgin and miracles), they certainly are cur'ous. Why, sir, if they can have 'em on—lots of Protestants as well as Catholics—they're just as *pleased!* and they say the prayers on 'em as simple as children. And I tell you, sir, I've seen such direct answers to 'em, specially the kind they call novenys, as would make you hold your breath.

"They don't reely *worship* Her neither," he continued, with the air of giving a staggering piece of information; "but, my! they do love Her. They call Her 'Mother of Mercy,' and 'Ark of the Covenant,' and 'Mornin' Star,' and a lot more names; and all of 'em have a sensible meanin' too. These here are 'cause She's never any more tired of pleadin' to God for sinners than the mothers down here is of prayin' for their bad children; and 'cause She bore the Promised Redeemer, like the Jews' Ark bore the Tables of the

Law; and 'cause She come before the Sun of Justice rose on the world, and so forth, sir. Just as pat! And every one givin' the same answer, though, as the copy-books say, 'There's many men of many minds.'"

"Why, you're a papist yourself, Saunders," said the Doctor, laughing.

"I *ain't*, sir"—with some heat,—“but I certainly do feel different about the Virgin from what I used to. Before I didn't think of Her at all, but one day when one of them little white-bonneted women—Sisters of Charity, you know, sir; and good as gold they are too—says to me, ‘Mr. Saunders, if you're willin' to pay so much respect to Mary, the mother of Washington, * I think you can surely spare a little for Mary, the Mother of God.’ I was sort of struck in a heap. The Mother of God! That was pretty solemn—Land! listen to that, sir!”

That was the screeching of shell that had grown so painfully familiar during the day.

* Gen. Andrew Jackson's choice of an epitaph to be placed on the tomb of Gen. Washington's mother.

IX.

WHILE O'Keefe was giving up liberty, and Oester was being carried to the rear, the 7th and the rest of the brigade were organizing about a mile from the rail-fence barricade; but they had hardly begun to pull into shape before Clairburn made a fresh pounce on them, and for the next twenty minutes the display of horseshoes would have rejoiced the soul of a farrier.

About four miles ahead they filed off into the open fields, where they fetched up "face to" the wood out of which they had just rushed, and made another attempt at reorganization; and were succeeding, when again the fatal yell rose in a steady *crescendo*; and "Fighting Pat" for the third time hurled his command on them, his men looking like a vast grey shadow in the falling night—but it was a shadow of death, and the bugles of the 7th and 4th sharply and thrillingly called the "Dismount." The men were ranged in line, and the Chicago Board of Trade Bat-

tery* wheeled its six guns in front of them, with the precision of veterans and the coolness of a dress parade, and unlimbered and began to serve their pieces with such effect that the Greys were checked, but not beaten back until after an hour of hard work.

But how they fought! It was "Charge!" from the Grey, then grape and canister from the Blue. "Retreat!" for the Grey, then shells from the Blue. "Charge!" and again a scattering death. "Retreat!" and a rain of shrieking iron. In the midst of it one of the Battery's guns burst, and then it was harder work for the other five, and a death of honor on the field for many a bold cannoneer.

Needless to say, they stuck to it, however, till the woods swallowed back the Grey-coats; and then, exhausted, bleeding, but undaunted, the command rolled from their horses, and slept like Seven Sleepers.

The next two days were a confused blank to Oester, and very "hagamarizing"† to Jet;

* This was one of the finest batteries in Sherman's army, and was raised, equipped, and (I believe) manned to a considerable extent by the Chicago Board of Trade.

† A word which in darky dialect means something which is both worrying and painful.

for Clairburn still hung on the rear and flank of our troops, and the fighting was incessant: the Blue hating to go back to camp leaving the railroad intact, the Grey knowing that the life of Atlanta as a Confederate stronghold depended on so keeping it, and both behaving accordingly. And when two sets of Americans, with opposing ideas on the same subject, come into collision, I can just assure you that "Greek meeting Greek" is nowhere as a simile of the tug of war that follows. One incident, however, both boy and mule remembered as long as they lived, and for very much the same reason.

Jet had hung about the ambulance so persistently, after his young master was lifted into it, that he attracted Saunders' attention. He'd dodge teamsters, wagons, troopers, and trees; he'd gallop, he'd trot, he'd crawl, according to the pace of the train of the wounded; and if he got separated from it in any way, he'd lift up his voice in such appalling discord that everything that could give way did so rather than listen to his "hon-ing." So when one of the leaders fell lame, Saunders clapped Jet into the harness, and he trotted on, looking funny enough by the

side of the rawboned, long-legged beast he was paired with. But he held his own; for wasn't he pulling his young master into safety at every step? He balked at nothing, he shirked nothing; and even when they came to a deep, swift creek, that roared across their line of retreat, he plunged in stoutly, and—in a minute was floundering and choking, with not even the tips of his ears out!

The rest of the team was not so badly off, for the horses were taller; but even they were nearly afloat; and Saunders, looking with dismayed eyes at the almost perpendicular bank before him, realized that violent remedies were necessary.

He was driving that day (owing to some accident to the faithful black who usually filled the seat), and rose to the occasion—literally; for he stood up, and let fly a long whip, that snapped like a volley of musketry, emitting as he did so a torrent of shouts and stalwart Puritan swear-words that made the woods ring. The horses scrambled and strained and lashed and plunged, and whenever and wherever he saw a flank or shoulder rise, he cut; so, impossible as it seemed, they actually got through, and started up the

bank before the "block" grew serious behind them.

Then Saunders eased down a trifle, and had puckered his mouth for a whistle, when the off wheel struck a boulder; the horses recoiled with the sudden stop, and then sprang forward so violently under the whip that every wounded man in the ambulance was jerked into the river.

The shock of the cold water roused Oester from the lethargy he was in, and he tried to strike out; but the agony in his breast made him drop his arms, and he was going under when a manly voice shouted in his ear: "Hold up, my boy; you're all right!"

And there was the young General on his splendid horse* breasting the current, and bending low to catch him. Four times did Kilpatrick do this thing, and each time he fished out one of his men, and towed him ashore, with a joke or a word of sympathy as occasion demanded; and then he sent back for brandy and dry blankets (for everything was soaked or sunk in the bottom of the stream), showing as much care and concern

* This incident is strictly true.

as if the fate of *thousands* were not weighing on his mind.

But the boy got a chill, and when on the afternoon of the fifth day the command swung round the last segment of the half circle to the left, and the great raid was ended, he was put into the hospital to be treated for lung fever.

Here a great surprise awaited him. He had been light-headed for several days, not painfully so; for neither the blood nor carnage nor fatigue of the raid had oppressed him; but always he had seen a set of fleeting visions of Our Lady as he had thought of Her during that bitter ride, and he said and muttered so often the two prayers he had learned that the attendant, naturally supposing him to be a Catholic, sent Father Ryan to him as soon as his head cleared.

The priest was a Southern man, born and bred, and every instinct of his nature in sympathy with the Confederacy; but, true to his calling as a representative and servant of Christ, he ministered as tenderly to the Blue as to the Grey, saying in response to the reproaches of some of his congregation: "My children, when they are sick and wounded

they cease to be enemies, and become simply souls—souls to be saved and healed.”

As he came abreast the boy, and saw his youth and the candor of his blue eyes, he asked, with a smile :

“And what can I do for you ?”

“Tell me about the Mother of God.”

“What about Her ?”

“Everything, please.”

“Are you a Catholic ?”

“No, sir.”

“Well, then, I’ll begin at the beginning; for Her life is so interwoven with that of Our Lord, that I can’t tell you the one without the other.”

And he sat for twenty minutes, speaking clearly and concisely, then left, promising to come soon again ; for the boy’s face began to flush with fatigue.

As he did so, some one called: “Mister—Deacon—you, sir.”

As Father Ryan turned, Oester did the same with his heavy, tired head, and saw Denbigh.

“Did you want me ?” asked Father Ryan, pleasantly. “Are you one of my children, too ?”

"No! oh, no!" said Denbigh; "I ain't a Romanist; but I'd like to speak to you, if you can spare the time."

But when Father Ryan sat beside him, he seemed to have no words.

"Is it something that is on your mind?" asked the priest.

"Well, that's about the size of it, but blamed if I know where to begin!" And he rubbed his forehead worriedly. "Look here," he broke out, finally, "can you find out anything about a man that's been taken prisoner? Not an officer, but a private, like me. And I don't know what prison he's into; and maybe he ain't alive; and I'd give my foot—willin'—" (Oester saw one was bandaged and packed in ice) "to find him; and, I say, *can* you do it for me? I'll give you my year's pay and my watch, and—" He had dragged himself up into a half-sitting position, and was gripping Father Ryan's arm with a force that made him thankful he hadn't met the man in battle.

"I'll do it gladly," said Father Ryan, "*without* the year's pay and the watch; but you must try to be a little clearer."

"I can't," replied Denbigh, falling back

on the pillow with a groan, "unless I tell you a long story that would make you hate me too much to want to help me. And I've *got* to be helped." (The man's undisciplined nature showed in his desperation.)

"My friend," said the priest, gravely, "do you think I would dare refuse any favor I could grant—I, a priest of the Living God, who am trying to walk in the footsteps of Our Lord, and who begs to be forgiven as he forgives others?"

Denbigh looked suspiciously and gloomily at him.

"Do you *feel* that way, or do you just *talk* that way—wait! I don't mean to ask that, but I haven't any kind of religion, and didn't believe anybody else had until—will you *swear* to help me if I tell you?"

"No; that is unnecessary; but I promise in the name of God and Our Lady to help you to the best of my ability."

"'God and Our Lady,' that's what he said," muttered the man. Then with averted eyes he told the story of O'Keefe's rescuing him, closing with:

"I sha'n't rest, I *can't*, till he's out of that hell. I've heard you Catholics stick together

like dock-burs, so maybe some other priest round the prisons can tell you where he is, and how I can get him North."

"I'll write immediately to the priest nearest Belle Isle and Andersonville, and to Richmond; and the moment *I* hear, *you* shall. Or would you like me to stop by to-morrow or next day? There may be something else you will think of that you'd like to tell me about."

"All right," said Denbigh, eagerly; "I wish you would."

"Halloo, boy!" he said, as, having watched Father Ryan off, he settled down in bed, and spied Oester. "How'd *you* get here?"

And when the boy told him, and added with quiet conviction, "It was the medal did it," he neither scoffed nor jeered, but lay quite still, whistling an inaudible tune, and thinking deeply.



X.

THE days stretched into a long week, broken only by the surgeon's rounds, and two visits from Father Ryan, who brought, however, but the comfort of his presence to the little bugler, and the assurance of his sympathy to Denbigh; for of O'Keefe he had been able to learn nothing.

A genuine friendship meantime had sprung up between the bed-neighbors, unlikely as it seemed, which became a comfort to both; although it was necessarily a silent one; for Oester *couldn't* speak, and Denbigh found little to say, except when his savagery cropped out as Pain ran its burning ploughshare up and down his crushed leg, or when he was pouring out his questions and hopes about O'Keefe. But they exchanged kindly looks, and many a time the man swallowed back his groans and curses as the patient blue eyes of the boy looked at him aggrieved and amazed.

Denbigh had fallen on hard times. His

was a stubborn nature, that ran deep in single grooves, and its entire strength was set on finding O'Keefe, and releasing him—a possibility that halted lame in Despair's own harness. It was the first time he had ever concerned himself about any one, and through the opening made in the iron armor of his selfishness Love and Conscience entered, and his whole being was in revolt against their stings. His mind was pitted against his body; and burst ligaments, crushed bones, and a troubled mind are a bad combination, I can tell you.

Saunders did him an ugly turn, too, although quite unconsciously; for one day, when he incidentally mentioned a brother who had come home from Belle Isle—kept alive by his passionate desire to see once more the White Mountains of his boyhood, and who died as the train drew up in the station,—Denbigh had questioned him with a terrible eagerness as to the condition of the prisoners, the hardships they had undergone, and the effects of the mental torture produced by the sights and sounds around them; and Saunders' answers, sharpened by personal grief and faithful memory, had

nearly maddened him, the closing sentence completing the keenness of his suffering.

"I don't like to rake over old sores like these here; and I don't, as a gen'ral practice. When I fust come down here, I usedter pretty frequent; but that O'Keefe—wonder whatever did become of that fellow, any way?—he was a great chap for list'nin'. Good heart he had, too. Many's the time I've set and talked with him about it tell I've seen the tears a-rollin' down his face, an' always he says to me: 'I pray to God and Our Lady' (that's the Virgin, you know) 'that I'll die before I git into *their* hands.' He'd a horror of 'em that was *solid* and no mistake."

And when Father Ryan came the next time, his frantic appeal set the priest to wondering whether the man's mind could bear the strain. At the close of their agitated talk the Father said :

"Pray for the news you seek, my friend ; *that's* the surest means to the end."

"Pray !" exclaimed Denbigh, sullenly. "Much your God would care for *my* prayers ! Besides, isn't it a snivelling thing to do, to go to somebody you haven't ever taken any

notice of, or done anything for all your life, and ask for a favor?"

Father Ryan's answer was the parable of the prodigal son.

"But," objected Denbigh, "that was his *son*."

"And so are you God's son, bought with a great price, set free at the cost of His own life."

Denbigh started at this last, but said, sardonically: "I look like it, don't I? Don't talk to me that way. I've got to stand or fall by my own strength."

"Then," replied Father Ryan, "God love and pity you, for you're leaning on a broken reed—one of the sort that will pierce you, you know."

"Now, look here," said Denbigh, irritably, "what am I to do? I don't know anything about God, and I don't believe He'd bother to look out for me any way, even if I did. I've had a rough life; but, since I can remember, I never felt sorry for anything except about O'Keefe. When I got hit, I hit back; when a man did me a mean turn, I paid him off as soon as I could—"

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

"That's so," said Denbigh, emphatically.
"Who said that?"

"The Jews. But Our Lord gave a new commandment—'That you love one another, as I have loved you' . . . 'even to the death of the Cross.'"

"Is that what makes you Catholics so clannish?"

"Yes," said Father Ryan; "for the least of us who tries to practise our holy faith has to love his neighbor as himself, forgive seventy times seven, and forego revenge."

"That don't leave much show for the chaps that get started crooked."

"Oh! yes. 'There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance.'"

"I don't believe it!" said Denbigh, flatly.

"Why? Don't you think it a comforting belief?"

"Yes, but it's dead against nature."

"Human; yes; but, thank God, it is the promise of Eternal Mercy. Come, Denbigh, think a minute. You are not playing fair. Here's something on which you've set your heart. Prayer is your only chance to get it;

for, although we do all we can as men, we can accomplish nothing unless God so wills it. (Don't you remember, 'Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it'?) And you are leaving *me* to do all the praying." And he smiled pleasantly.

But Denbigh's lips were set, and he picked nervously at the bedclothing; so Father Ryan rose, touched the restless hand kindly, and said:

"Try not to be discouraged. I'm begging Our Blessed Lady and St. Anthony to pray for your intention too—St. Anthony is the patron of all things or persons lost or strayed—and I'm sure they'll help you. By the way, I've brought you a medal. Will you wear it?"

The man made a hasty gesture of dissent, then, with an effort at his old carelessness, said: "All right."

But when Father Ryan was gone, Denbigh looked at it curiously, and asked several elaborately indifferent questions of Our Lady's little client in the next bed.

Oester's sharp suffering meantime had been intermitted by the great joy of baptism, and a pleasure that filled his boyish heart with

triumph and delight—nothing less than the purchase of Jet. It came about in a very natural way, although small buglers are not usually able to buy valuable mules in war times.

Saunders told him, the day after their arrival, how the little beast had saved his life, and how pluckily he had behaved afterward; and the boy, with eyes shining, half with laughter, half with tears (for he was very weak), had begged so earnestly to see the surgeon-in-chief, that that important functionary actually came to him; and Oester told, or rather gasped, his story with such eagerness that his visitor's indifference changed to interest, and the latter ended by promising to see that Jet was "mustered out," and the boy's back-pay applied to buying this trusty four-legged friend.

And that was how, when Atlanta went down under the Blue avalanche hurled on it, and the wounded were sent back to Chattanooga, the little black mule happened to go along too,—the property, as the bill of sale declared, of E. Oester, Bugler of Co. M, 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry, U. S. Army.

XI.

THE shouts and huzzas rang loud and long for that victory beyond Altoona Pass, and the sick rallied from their ails and wounds for pure joy; but Denbigh was in the depths. To him the return to Thomas's lines meant separation from Father Ryan, to whom he clung as his one hope of discovering O'Keefe; and he fell into such a state that the priest sacrificed valuable time to sit by him in the ambulance for the first miles of the journey, assuring and reassuring him of his continued interest, and of his confidence that God and Our Lady would help him in his extremity.

Denbigh could not disbelieve the honest face and kind voice; but neither could he believe, for all faith and he were strangers; and, between his doubting mind, his troubled heart, and the exhausting trip, he was a very ill man when the wagons lumbered into Chattanooga.

And Oester was not much better off; for a driving storm played the mischief with his inflamed lungs, and when they reached the hospital he had only strength to beg for a place next his burly comrade, whose mainstay he became in the weary weeks that followed.

They often talked over the chances for and against finding O'Keefe, and sometimes Denbigh was boastfully hopeful; but, then, when Father Ryan's letters came, still without news of the lost trooper, he would fall into paroxysms of despair that were awful to witness. At first these exhaled in ravings, but later they passed in long, shivering agues, that left him silent and half lifeless for two or three days.

Oester finally got very uneasy about him, and his Rosary often slipped through his thin fingers as he prayed to the sweet Comforter of the Afflicted for the man suffering so acutely at his side.

One day, when things were very bad, he said, with some hesitation:

"I say, Denbigh, why don't you ask the Blessed Virgin to help you? She's the sweetest—the dearest—and, then, don't you

know 'it never has been heard of, through all ages, that any one who had recourse to Her ever was forsaken'?"

"Who said so?" asked Denbigh, as he lay back spent on his cot, the sweat standing on his forehead, and his hands—once so muscular—shaking like a nervous woman's.

"St. Bernard."

"Oh! hang it!" said Denbigh; "you and your saints!" And he flounced over in a way that put an end to the conversation.

But in the night, when Sleep fled, and Memory and Pain took turns at tormenting him, he found his mind dwelling on it—"It never has been heard of, through all ages, that any one was ever forsaken." And they called Her the Mother of God. What if the whole thing were true—the story of Bethlehem and Calvary? The coarsest, lowest man in the world is bound to have some feeling for his mother; and this Man they called Christ, who was perfect enough to give His life for His enemies, why, of course, He'd care more, thought Denbigh. And from his wild heart burst his first prayer (if prayer it could be called):

"God—if there *is* one—give me this life!

Mary—if you can and will hear me—beg your Son to do it!”

And after that he sent this challenge hurtling up to Heaven morning, noon and night; sometimes with a faint hope, sometimes with angry impatience, but most often with despair, as the days and weeks rolled by, and Christmas was at hand, with the blank wall of silence still unbroken.

The 25th dawned in a whirl of white—as if the Angels of Peace and Good-will were trying to shroud away the crimson stains on valley and hill; and the lusty wind

“roared sweet thunders up to God”

among the pines that crowned the mountains. To be sure, the hospital carrier could not find much trace of Heaven in the flakes that sifted into his neck, and the blasts that tweaked his nose till the water stood in his eyes, as he floundered through the drifts from the post; but he was doing its work, and there was a bit of its practical charity in his heart, that had made him load himself and his horse to their utmost capacity with the Christmas parcels and letters for “the boys,” and set him grinning whenever he thought of their surprise and joy when he would stumble in,

“looking like old Kriss himself, with his fine wig of snow and his pack on his back.”

Oester spied him first, and hurried to meet him, followed by an excited throng of such men as could hobble or go on crutches, and by the shouts and questions of such as had to “stay put” in their beds; and when among the letters he saw one for Denbigh, in Father Ryan’s writing, his heart gave a great leap; for all his Christmas devotions and prayers had gone for the “intention” of good news, and hope flamed high.

He laid the missive on the troopers’ breast—for he had fallen asleep, worn out with waiting—and passed on to a poor fellow whose hands were off, and for whom he had promised to write a letter home, wishin’ ’em many happy returns of the day, and tellin’ ’em he’d be there on his legs fast enough, when once he started; but that he’d grown too proud to shake hands with anybody; for the surgeons admired them paws to such a extent that they’d put ’em in spirits as specimens of good looks.”

As he finished his dictation, with a wide, cheerful grin, a suppressed shout from Denbigh brought the boy hurrying down the ward.

"He's found! he's found!" he cried, and from that iron man's eyes the tears streamed, and from his breast a sob tore its way, while the little bugler pranced feebly but gaily around his cot, saying: "I told you so! I told you so! I knew the Blessed Virgin would find him for you. Where is he?"

"In Andersonville," replied Denbigh; "and if your God—"

"Leave off the y, Denbigh."

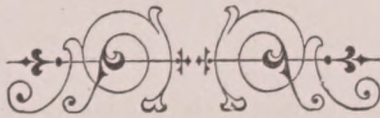
"Well, then, if—God will give me a chance, I'll try to do the square thing; and if your Lady—"

"Another y too many," cackled the youngster.

And Denbigh lay back, with a softened look on his grim face, too happy for words.

After this he made a turn for the better, talked very seriously with the surgeon-in-charge as to the best way of building up quickly and soundly, became the most obedient of patients, and took to watching the weather as if he were a barometer paid by the hour. This last phase puzzled the young doctor not a little, and he began a paper on the "Effects of Hygrometric Changes upon Certain Nervous Temperaments"; but Oester knew that

when the storms beat, and the frosts nipped, and the long winter rains drowned the land, his thoughts and heart were away in the open stockade at Andersonville, with the freezing, starving, unsheltered men, and that he was suffering for and with the one who was dying there that he might live.



XII.

BY mid-February Denbigh was up and about again, and ready for duty; but the day he got his discharge from the hospital he slipped on a piece of ice, and snapped his sword-arm, to his own great disgust and to Oester's satisfaction.

"I'm sorry you got hurt, Denbigh," he said; "but I am so glad you ain't goin' away! It would have been so lonesome!"

For never again would the boy-bugler of Company M thrill the breasts of his comrades with the wild, sweet music of the "charge," or the stirring alarm of the "retreat"; never again would Jet's black legs trot in advance of the long-stretching charges; for the bullet that was turned from the breast of his little master by Our Lady's medal had so bruised and shocked his lungs that they were all too easy a prey to cold, and the surgeon had put him on detached—very detached—duty about the hospital.

Denbigh looked at him half grimly, half amused—it was so new to him to have any one glad about him.

“Yo *do* seem badly off for comp’ny,” he growled, “with only a thousand or so fellows around.”

Oester laughed.

“I know, but they ain’t home-folks. Now, you and Jet and I, why we’re all one family; we belong to the 7th—”

“A mule, a fool, and a boy—nice family!” interrupted Denbigh.

“And the regiment’s all the home I had,” finished the boy.

“I too,” said Denbigh. “But shut up, that’s a good younker! I’m ’most crazy with this here arm, and thinkin’ of this fresh stop to gettin’ ahead.”

About mid-March the rumor came up that Wilson was going to make a dash into the heart of the Grey country with “discretionary orders,” and that the 7th was going with him.

This *was* hard luck with a vengeance, and their faces became as blue as their coats when they thought of how they had to stay behind and miss the “fun.” Then came

word that Wilson was lost, and for a month no news could be had of the man that was cutting such a broad swath through Alabama and Northern Georgia. Then came the wonderful message of Appomattox Court House, the simultaneous fall of Richmond and Selma; then Wilson burst through the "no-news" veil, and in rapid succession, like beads of fire running down the telegraph wires, came the announcements of Montgomery, Columbus and Macon, Johnston's surrender, and—oh! balm to Denbigh's heart—the release of the Andersonville prisoners.

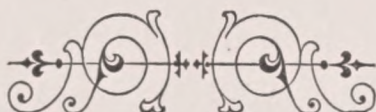
Denbigh would have started off without leave, pay, clothing, staff or scrip; but Oester managed to pull his head out of the clouds long enough to put him through the proper formalities; and at the same time, by the advice of his friend, the surgeon, he got his own discharge, pay, and Jet's purchase papers. Then they both started for Annapolis, to which port Father Ryan told them that O'Keefe (or the man identified as O'Keefe) would be sent.

They reached there early in the morning on a troop-train (cattle cars); for Denbigh's impatience could not be contained, and he

found no trouble in "mixing in" with a returning regiment from his own State. They "snatched" a breakfast, and then Oester went to see about getting Jet fed and watered (it wasn't safe in those busy times to depend on other people), and Denbigh posted off to see when the boats were due. As to this last, though, the rumors conflicted so (and I'm afraid his temper, rubbed into a great irascibility by his anxiety, did not smooth matters) that by the time the whistles were sounding, he was as far from positive news as ever. The Marshal's office was shut; nobody knew who could make out the papers necessary for going aboard; and no one in the throng that raced, that jostled, that surged and poured to see the men raised from worse than the tomb, could or would tell him what *ought* to be done. All were too eager to reclaim friend, child, brother, husband, kinsman, from their long journey into the Valley of the Shadow; and such as had not that hope groped tearfully down to hear some chance word of their dead and "missing."

Here and there some kind hearts listened to him, but they shook their heads, and had

no help to give except their sympathy; and it was well on into the afternoon when Denbigh got to the wharf, and had to halt before the wall of steel that guarded the enclosure, watching with miserable and envious eyes those who had passes, and who went in to claim their own.



XIII.

DENBIGH pressed as near as the guards would permit; and, O God! what an awful sight met his eyes! Were those creatures human that staggered up the gang-plank? Were those objects, lying on pallets, and carried by on stretchers, men? Gaunt with hunger, idiotic with suffering, rotted with scurvy and gangrene, covered with sores, they were dying by the half score, even as the boat lay alongside the wharf, and home and freedom were in their grasp.

He turned deathly sick, and the green hills and blue river surged and rolled together like a groundswell; but he shook off his faintness, and, when the first rush was over, told the soldier nearest him that he had a friend aboard he wanted to carry away.

“Got a permit?”

“No.”

“Get one.”

"But, man," said Denbigh, "the office is closed now."

"That's so. Then wait till to-morrow."

"I can't and I won't!" flashed Denbigh. Then, fearing some delay, he controlled himself enough to reason and remonstrate with the soldier; and after a while the latter said:

"Well, see here; I've got my orders, but I guess the captain wouldn't be too hard on me at such a time, and—" with reckless good-nature—"don't care if he is. *I* can stand it if *you* can; and I ain't goin' to keep e'er a one of them poor critters away from his friends after he's got this far on the road home."

And Denbigh slipped by as the soldier looked away, and in a few seconds was standing, cap in hand, before the officer in charge.

"Well?" said the latter, briskly.

"I want a man named O'Keefe, please sir."

He turned to the ledger, ran his finger down the *O's*, then down the *K's*, then shook his head.

"No such man here."

Denbigh's heart seemed to stop.

"He must be, sir."

"Well, he isn't."

"Ain't this the *Queen of the Chesapeake*, sir?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's the boat he was put aboard to come North."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir. Here it is in writin'." And he drew a well-worn envelope from his pocket containing the few lines from Father Ryan: ". . . He will be sent with the draft of men shipped aboard the *Queen of the Chesapeake*."

"That's so," said the officer; "but there may have been some mistake, you know."

"My God! don't say that, sir. You don't know what hangs on findin' him."

"Is he your brother?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, a friend?"

"Well, sir, he ain't any call to look on me as even that."

The young officer turned surprised eyes on him.

"Think again, sir, please," said Denbigh. "Ain't there a chance he could have been slipped aboard without bein' booked?"

"Yes," was the somewhat reluctant answer,

"he might. But I say, my good fellow, I've been on duty twenty-four hours, and I'm *very* tired. Couldn't you come back to-morrow?"

Denbigh made a gesture of mute despair, and launched his old cry for help to Heaven. The officer looked at him more attentively as he did so, and the anguish that in a few minutes had drawn the man's face old and thin, touched his heart (you see he was young, and had not had time to grow entirely hard in the midst of War's horrors); so, giving a mighty yawn and an impatient shake, he shouted:

"Orderly!"

A soldier appeared and touched his cap.

"Were all the released prisoners registered?"

"No, sir."

"How many were not, and where are they?"

"About a hundred, sir. Some of 'em's in the forward cabin, some of 'em was buried at sea, and some of 'em's just dead."

"Can you identify your man?"—to Denbigh.

"Yes, sir. He's about my size, broad and strong, a red face, black hair, grey eyes, and a turn-up nose."

The officer shook his head but said nothing, and led the way to the forward cabin, the floor of which was littered with pallets, on which lay men in every stage of emaciation. Over some the sheets were entirely drawn; but through the folds knees, feet, and ghastly bones set up with horrid distinctness.

“Not much breadth or color here, my man,” he said, sadly, as Denbigh’s startled look flashed around the enclosure.

“I’ll look at the—the—dead ones first,” remarked the trooper, in a choked voice.

And one after another poor face was uncovered, but without result. Then he went from mattress to mattress, scrutinizing, and in one or two instances calling the men by the name that had become his text. But negation and denial met him at all sides; and, with the revulsion from hope, that deathly sickness again swept over him, and, with his hands pressed to his head, he dropped on a seat, muttering faintly: “I’m beat, my God! I’m beat!”

“Run, fetch some brandy,” said Lieut. Craig to the orderly

As he stood looking at Denbigh, while the

latter, feeling bruised and crushed, repeated, "My God! my God!" in a tone of agony that made it a most complete prayer, a quivering wreck of a voice that had once been sweet and flexible crooned feebly:

"Holy Mary, Mother mild,
Hear, oh! hear Thy feeble child!
Waves of sorrow o'er me roll,
Storms of—"

"Who's that?" cried Denbigh, a thrill running through him.

"Where?" asked the young officer.

"That singing."

"I didn't hear any singing."

"Yes, sir; here." And he laid his hand on the door of a small state-room near by.

"That, sir," observed the orderly, who had returned, "is 'Crazy Pat.' When the transports was comin' off, some of the boys asked me to look out for him special; for he'd just spent himself a-lookin' out for them in that cursed hole—beg your pardon, sir—"

"Yes, yes," said Denbigh; "go on!" And he seized his arm with his old strength, and his eyes burned so fiercely that the man said to himself:

"Whew, you look as if you needed a strait-jacket, *you* do!" Then to Lieut. Craig:

“And so when we got started, I just got one of the little state-rooms, and put him in it. I hope you don’t mind, sir. You see he was so *uncommon* good to them poor chaps.”

“Mind? Not a bit, Holt. I think it was mighty good of you to do it.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Holt, reddening. “My, you’d just ought to hear about that poor fellow, though they do say when fust he come he was just like a wild beast; but when he got to lookin’ around he stopped a-cussin’ and growlin’, an’ turned to like a—a—a—’most like a, angel. He’d taken off his clo’es tell he’d most nothin’ left, and covered up the naked ones; and when he hadn’t any more, he’d cover ’em with his body,—for the warmth of it, sir, you know; for it was a most cruel cold winter. He shared his feed with the hungriest, an’ when that there spring* busted out, he’d crawl backwards and forwards for hours, a-fetchin’ water to them as was too weak to go for it; and tell his mind went—”

Here Denbigh flung up his arms with a cry

* A spring of pure fresh water burst up through the sand within the stockade—a miracle of God’s mercy.

that made the soldier jump and edge a little farther off. He thought, "You never know what they're up to—the lunatics!"

Holt went on: "He was the comfortingest cretur to the dyin' ones! He'd a little crucifix and a string o' prayer-beads, and when they was a-givin' the countersign to Death—an' glad enough to go, poor souls!—he'd hold 'em in his arms an' pray with 'em; an' hold that there cross afore their eyes, and put them there beads in their hands, an' turn 'em on their faces when they was dead, so they wouldn't be stared at, and set by 'em tell they was buried. And even after he turned lunny he'd sit and sing an' pray in a way that'd make you laugh an' cry, too; for sometimes it was songs that was funny as fun, and sometimes it was hymns an' wailin's and such; and he'd such a way of callin' on the Virgin Mary—"

"It's him! I know it's him!" said Denbigh, shaking with excitement. "Take me to him. For any sake in the world that'll hurry you, take me!"

And Holt opened the door.

XIV.

WAS *that* O'Keefe?

Denbigh went on his knees and hung over him, with the tears streaming down his face, and the great veins in his throat filled to bursting. He caught his hands—like the claws of an eagle, with the nails gone to talons—in his own shaking palms, and tried to call him by name; but he could only make the awful, choking sound that unaccustomed weeping brings to a man.

“I'll go make out his papers,” said Lieut. Craig, and disappeared; while Holt stood near the door, ready to pounce *in* should the supposed lunatic offer to hurt “Crazy Pat,” and *out* if he should fly at himself.

But Denbigh's soul was concentrated in the look with which he devoured the pathetic figure before him. Where was the broad back that heaved the dead horse from off him *that* day? Where the muscles that made him the most fearless and tireless rider in the

troop? where the ruddy cheeks, and the thick, black hair? Sunken eyes that looked vacantly at him; sunken cheeks, and blue lips that clung to gums almost toothless with scurvy; the saucy nose drawn and pinched as on a death's-head; the black hair white now, and clinging scantily to the skull; and the sturdy figure so light he could lift it on one arm.

“O’Keefe!” he cried at last; “O’Keefe, look up! Don’t you know me, man?”

But he might as well have talked to the dead.

“I must get him out of this!” he half implored, half flung at Holt.

“And you shall,” said that kind-hearted fellow. “Where’ll you take him?”

“Away to Pennsylvania—anywhere in the world he’ll want to go.”

And they lifted him in the blanket, and carried him to the gang-plank. But here a difficulty arose. As the air smote his face he roused up, and in a distinct voice announced he’d go no farther; and when they tried to move on, he clutched at the nearest stanchion, and held so desperately they could not get him loose without hurting him. Denbigh

was in the deepest distress, and it would have amazed anybody who had ever known the rough trooper to see how gentle he was, and how tenderly he coaxed and plead with the crazy man.

Won at last by his friend's manner, or tired of his own whim, O'Keefe motioned to him to come closer; and as Denbigh bent, the sick man whispered, with a sly look in his eyes:

"I won't let 'em take me, for they'll be carryin' me back to the stockade; but if ye'll watch your chance and get me a horse, we can go free sure." And he laughed the vacuous laugh of madness.

Holt shook his head.

"It's just a freak. He couldn't set a horse two minutes."

But the struggle began the moment they attempted to move on again; and one of the surgeons coming by at the moment, stopped long enough to say:

"Ah, 'Crazy Pat'! Poor fellow, he'll die anyhow, so let him have his way if you—"

The rest of the sentence, and Denbigh's fierce denial of its first half, were drowned in a loud bray; and there were Jet and Oester

peering over the railing of the wharf, to see what had become of him.

A motion to the boy brought him aboard at a full run, and he shared Denbigh's joy and dismay at the news and sight of their long-lost comrade; then, as soon as he got the idea of a horse being wanted, he rushed for Jet, and in a jiffy had the mule alongside, and was helping O'Keefe to mount.

The poor fellow had taken a fancy to Denbigh, who walked beside him, holding him up, and two or three times O'Keefe whispered:

"Be careful! Muffle his hoofs, and tie up his nose. If the guards get a sound they'll be firin' and chasin', an' we're dead men. Keep to the trees, keep to the trees!"—in great excitement—"they'll catch us, and, man, *if you knew*—"

A look of horror finished the sentence more forcibly than a volume of words could have done.

As they began to emerge from the trees, and the houses of the town came in sight, O'Keefe grew wild.

"Not there!" he exclaimed; "not there! They'll get us. Back for the life of ye!"

And arguments and entreaties were useless.

As Denbigh fell silent, discouraged, Oester had a happy inspiration.

“Look here, Denbigh,” he whispered. “Pretend to hide with him till it’s dark, then we’ll get him to the station. I’ll go now and get something for us all to eat.”

And he was off before Denbigh quite took it in. When he did, however, he lowered his voice, and, affecting great caution, said :

“Let’s hide here till night.” And, O’Keefe eagerly assenting, he lifted him down, spread his coat for him to lie on, and took his head on his knee.

The spring was in full leaf, and the sunshine, the rustling of the trees, and the fresh, sweet air were like balm to the distraught brain ; and soon O’Keefe was in a sound sleep, from which he awakened to tear with eager fingers the food the boy had brought.

Toward night they got to the station ; but the crowd excited his fears, and again he refused to go, struggling so violently that a soldier, attracted by the scuffle (which took place somewhat apart from the station), spoke up to Denbigh :

“I’ve seen that sort before, and my advice

to you is to get him home on the tramp. The excitement of such frights and scares as these here 'll kill him sure; but if he has his way, and thinks he's escaping, he'll get a chance, maybe."

"But," said Denbigh, "how—"

"Get a couple of rubber blankets, a tent if you can, a coffee-pot, and a haversack for grub, and tramp it. That's *my* advice."

The man and boy looked at each other and nodded; and while Oester plunged off to get Jet out of the cattle-car in which he had been shipped, and explain to the agent (who growled about refunding the money, but did it when he heard "Andersonville prisoner"), Denbigh led O'Keefe away to the appointed place of meeting. And that very night they started in as straight a line as they could make for the Juniata Valley.

They fell in with the humor of the madman, trod stealthily, muffled Jet's hoofs, and halted only when the dawn began to signal up the day in the east. Then they hid in the woods till dark, the man and boy taking turns to watch their comrade; and when night fell they started on again, Denbigh always at his side, with his arm about him,

and the tired, crazy head often resting on his shoulder. And as he went his heart and lips kept time to his tread —

“God, I thank Thee! Most Holy Virgin, I thank Thee! Listen to my thanks, please — you listened once to my prayers — though they aren’t much in face of your mercy and goodness.”

And truer praise is seldom given to Heaven than that which welled from his deep gratitude.

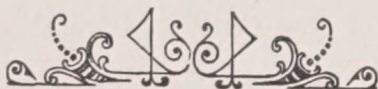
As they rose higher into the mountains, and the air blew keener and sweeter, O’Keefe brightened perceptibly. Sometimes he would break into singing, his sweet Irish voice swelling on the night; then he lost his dread of travelling by daylight; and one afternoon, when they ran across a party of farm lads out for a holiday, he looked at them tranquilly, and stood his ground without any sign of fear.

Once Denbigh trembled on the verge of a hope so exquisite as to shake his being to its centre. It was on a sultry day; they had halted, exhausted with the heat, and a violent thunder-storm burst over them. As the bolts fell, and the sharp rattle of the

meeting clouds rolled away in sullen booming, O'Keefe looked up, with his hand at his ear.

“Begad!” he said, “Kil’s at ’em in earnest; and there’ll be wigs upon the green before the night, or ye may call me an Orangeman.”

His friends hung breathless on his next words; but the light was only a flash of the brain, and they took up their tramp, in two minds about it.



XV.

THAT tramp was now drawing to a close. During its entire length Denbigh had been mind, strength, eyes, hands, and feet to his comrade, who in turn hung implicitly on him, and whimpered like a child if he lost sight of him; and even when O'Keefe tried to say his prayers, stumbling sorely in his efforts, Denbigh would hold the poor, thin claws together, and (with a little help from Oester) halt with him through the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary"; and deep were the thoughts in that man's soul as he traversed hill and valley face to face with Nature and Nature's God, learning lessons of faith and patience at every step, and his whole inner life softened and lighted by the new forces at work upon it.

One morning they came in sight of a village so pretty, so thriving, and so high, that Oester said:

"Let's stop here, Denbigh. You and I

can work, and we can take care of O'Keefe ourselves."

"I'd like to see anybody else try to interfere!" exclaimed Denbigh, fiercely.

"You see," continued the youngster, "you've got your back-pay, and I've got Jet. That'll give us a start. O'Keefe'll get a pension (that doctor at Chattanooga said anybody that's regularly outed—crazy, you know, or too mauled up to work, etc.,—gets over \$60 a month); so he can have all he wants, and we can manage somehow."

"Yes," said Denbigh: "but how'll we get work?"

"Go to the Catholic priest—there's a cross shinin' on a steeple—and ask him about it."

"Very well," responded Denbigh, greatly pleased. "Let's hustle along."

I think if Catholic priests ever could be surprised at anything, Father Connor would have been at the group that saluted his eyes as he sat on his porch, reading his Office—a tall, lank boy, brown as a berry; a little black mule, so fat that his sides stood out like saddle-bags; a burly man, travel-stained, and with wild beard and hair; and finally the still distressing figure of poor O'Keefe.

But a few words explained everything, and the kind heart of the Father overflowed. When they spoke about wishing to settle there, he held up his hands, and said :

“Now, thanks be to God and Our Lady, you’re just in the nick of time to buy out the Widow Suydam ! Her son in Iowa has lost his wife, and she has a distracted letter from him, begging her to come at once, and look after the farm and the children ; and she was wondering this very morning, after Mass, who would take her little house, her cow, her chickens, and her pasture-land. She’ll be willing to sell on time, and the price will suit, I think.”

Then, after a little more talk, the priest rose, saying :

“And now shall we not go into the church, and say a prayer of thanksgiving to God and Our Lady for bringing you home safely out of the bloodshed and danger ?”

They assented gladly ; and behold, as they entered the sacred place, O’Keefe lifted his battered cap, his vacant eyes took expression, and, after kneeling and crossing himself before the tabernacle, he went to Our Lady’s shrine, where with folded hands he raised

his voice and coherently repeated the "Hail Mary"!

Only another flash, but Father Connor whispered: "That's a good sign. It shows some stirring of memory."

And as the months went by, the crazy soldier, his friend, and the long-growing lad became a regular part of the congregation of St. Mary of the Mount.

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That was all at least thirty years ago; but to-day, if you get off the train at the right station on the Pennsylvania Central, and ask for Oester, or Denbigh, or O'Keefe, you will be directed to a comfortable red-roofed dwelling, in the midst of far-reaching fields, dotted with barns as big as meeting-houses, and filled with short horns and brawny draught-horses; and you'll see, wherever a master ought to be, a tall, broad-shouldered man, with candid blue eyes, ruddy cheeks, and lungs of leather—that's Oester.

He'll ask you up to the house, and present you to a fresh, comely woman, and half a dozen sturdy, well-behaved children. He'll seat you in a wide, delightful kitchen, with a sanded floor and a great fireplace, a raftered

ceiling garnished with strings of onions, apples, seeds, small bright gourds, and bunches of "old man"; and he'll go, or send one of his children, for "Uncle Dan" and "Uncle Tom"; and they'll come in—O'Keefe limping from the effects of exposure in that hard time long gone,—white-haired and wrinkled, but with his grey eyes and saucy nose as expressive of fun and gayety as ever, his mind clear, his tongue master of his speech; and Denbigh, massive and powerful still, but his grim face looking kind and his eyes gentle—like a mountain of granite with the dawn's light upon it; for faith has done for him what it does for all of us.

And if you are an old comrade, you'll glance at the carbines and sabres crossed above the mantel-shelf, and talk of the rattling fun of the old soldier days, with a sigh for the dead and a laugh for the living; and if you were in Company M on that famous raid, you'll suddenly say:

"And, by the way, old fellow, whatever became of the little black mule?"

Then Oester, with a smile on his lips and in his eyes, will rise, and all of you will troop out to a paddock near by, where an old, old

mule, with many white hairs shining on his glistening coat (he's curried and rubbed down every day by Oester himself), is standing knee-deep in luxury.

"Jet, old boy!" Oester says, and the beast trots—not as he did down the Sandtown Road, though,—over to the bars, and rubs his nose on the broad shoulder, and wags his round tail, not fast but yet decidedly; and each child strokes him, and two whip an apple and lump of sugar out of their pockets and beg him to eat them.

And then Oester laughs and says: "Do you remember the little red mule that left Heintzelmann sticking in the mud the morning the Johnnies cut us in half?"

And when you nod and laugh, too, at the memory of the ridiculous, long-legged trooper sitting on the saddle in the bog, and the wicked little red mule careering through the woods, he will say:

"I'm sure I saw him in '69, when I went down there to try to find Schwartz's body—to give it a Christian burial, you know; for we had got pretty well out of debt, and O'Keefe's mind had begun to clear permanently, and we agreed to do it. Well, I

looked around for some sort of wagon to take me out from the station, and I saw an old darky working in a field near by—trying to work I mean; for his mule, scored with scratches, blind in one eye, harness-galled, and thin as a rail, was kicking like the very old scratch.

“ ‘Hi there Uncle!’ * I said, ‘can you take me over—’

“Just then the mule made a furious lunge at him.

“ ‘Laws a-massy! there, you good-for-nothin’, wall-eyed, or’nary muel, you! How long you ’specs I’s e gwine to put up wid dis here owdacious ’havior? I’ll take de skin offen yo’ bones, an’ sell you to de ’monia [ammonia] factory. How you like dat, hey? ’Scuse me, marse’, what dat you gwine to say?’

“ ‘Can you take me over the Sandtown Road?’

“ ‘Dunno, sah.’

“ ‘I’ll give you two dollars to do it.’

“ ‘Two dollahs! Hear dat, you lim’ o’

* In the old days every well-bred young person, white and colored, called the old and respectable darkies, “Uncle” and “Auntie.”

Satan?'—to the mule. 'Is you gwine to 'have yo'self, and let yo' mawster yearn dat money, hey? Dat's a heap, sah.'

" 'Well, come along,' I exclaimed, impatiently. 'Where did you get the beast?'—as he untackled the plow and pulled a small ramshackle, spring (-less) wagon toward those agile heels, on which he kept an eye.

" 'He comed, sah. 'Twar in '64, 'bout the time Killumpatrick was a-raidin' an' a-tearin' round dese here parts; dere'd been a smart bresh in de woods over yander, and de rebels an' de Unions dey jes' went higgledy-piggledy ober de kentry; an' dis here muel come a-runnin' into the plantation cober, an' fust thing he done was to back heself agin my ba'n doah, an' mos' kick de hinges off; an' fum dat time I ain't had nuffin' but kickin' an' fightin'—mighty little wuk, you imp, you!—fum mawnin tell night.' "

Then, after you have laughed at the fate of the mule that shirked duty, and ran away so as to take life easily, you will go into the house, and spend a pleasant hour where love and good-will reign; and then the men and maids will drop in, and Oester and his family will kneel and say the Rosary (and you will

notice that Denbigh and O'Keefe kneel side by side, and that Denbigh's hand and shoulder are what help O'Keefe up and down); and then the household will bid one another a friendly good-night, and you will lie awake a few minutes to think of the strange and beautiful results that, through the grace of God and the prayers of Our Lady, worked out of those five days with Kilpatrick.



THE
JOSE-MARIA.

THE JOSÉ-MARIA.

I.

THAT was a very black day for the inmates of the little grey cottage just beyond Gloucester,—the day the *Elizabeth Jane* came stalking in like a ghost out of the clinging mist: the first ship home of the long-looked-for fishing fleet. It needed only a glance to discover that something was wrong with her; for her flag hung at half mast, and her anchor was let go without the usual cheer. The groups on shore looked at one another with pallid faces, and hearts beat fast in the grip of fear; for no one knew just where the blow would strike.

But not even these anxious ones shrank from the truth as nervously as the stalwart skipper of the *Elizabeth Jane*; for he had to break it to the little woman who stood somewhat apart from the others, with two babies hanging to her skirts, and a sturdy, bare-

legged boy standing at her side. He would rather have faced the fiercest "norther" that could rage; for his news was that her husband, Eliakim Barlow, A. B., had met with the fate of so many who go to the Grand Banks for the "catch,"—that he would never hand and reef and steer again, nor look on the faces of his children, nor answer any hail from mate or friend, "till the sea gives up its dead."

It was a story old in its monotone of a hundred years of happening on that coast, but as new and awful to the widow as if she had never started up from her sleep a score of times, shrieking aloud, with its terror foreshadowed in her dreams.

And the way of it was old, too. He had gone in the dory early one morning to look at the trawls—young Dan Frost with him,—and the fog had come down on them, and then—well, well! God help the sailor-man adrift on the great Atlantic, with the fogs smothering his chances for life, and the mysterious tides that ebb and flow about the Banks clutching at him, and dragging him to his death!

The captain got through his story somehow, but he combed the sweat from his fore-

head with his horny hand and shook his bushy head when he finished ; for, instead of shrieking and fainting, she listened in absolute silence, after the first gasp of anguish ; and then turned in a dazed, blinded way, and stumbled unsteadily back to the hut, where everything was scrubbed to shining neatness, and some humble attempt had been made at decoration to welcome the sailor's return. She sat in the corner all evening, looking stonily in front of her, till the two little children cried at her knee, frightened by her silence and the strange look in her face. But though she patted the little tow-heads mechanically, it was one of the neighbors who put them to bed and hushed their sobbing ; while another kindly tried to comfort her with words and sympathetic tears, shed half in memory of a similar grief, and half because of the dry, stricken eyes of the other.

But not then nor for years after did poor Idella Barlow know the relief tears bring ; and the old wives shook their heads and whispered to one another that she'd been "called," and would soon follow her husband to the heaven of such grieved hearts,—the heaven "where there is no more sea."

Far into the night the women came and went, and 'Liakim's shipmates stood in twos and threes about the doorway, their sou'westers off in the presence of that silent grief. But in a few days the ripple was past; other ships came staggering in from the flying death of the great deep, and some never made port at all; and in many of the fisherman's huts the fierce struggle for bread choked the cries of the widow and orphan, and numbed sympathy and heart-break alike.

Ah! those women of Gloucester know what is meant by that strange verse in the Old Testament: "Weep not for him who dieth, but for him who goeth into a far country; for he shall return nevermore." The wind means death to them, the mist is a shroud, the sea is a vast grave, and the fish—they have a song about the fish, learned from their Scotch sisters, and one verse runs:

"Buy my caller herring!

They're bonnie fish and wholesome faring.
Buy my caller herring, new-drawn from out the
Forth.

When you are sleeping on your pillows
Dream you aught of our poor fellows,
Darkling as they face the billows,
All to fill our woven willows? (creels)

Buy my caller herring !

They're not brought here without brave daring.
Buy my caller herring. You little know their worth.

Who'll buy my caller herring ?

O *you* may call them vulgar faring !

Wives and mothers most despairing

Call them 'Lives of Men.' '*'

.

The season that followed was a dreadful one ; and, though Dick did all a boy of twelve could do, affairs grew worse and worse, until the end came, and such an end ! He missed his mother one day, and only after a long search found her on the shore, dressed in her poor best, and gesticulating and talking to herself.

“*He* ain't dead. It's all a mistake. Seth Baxter's a reel good man, but he ain't got 'Liakim's message *straight*. He didn't *stay* in thet dory. He got aboard his own ship thet was anchored off the Banks, and went a cruise to the West Injies ; fur thet left lung was a *lee*-tle teched. An now he's a-comin' home, a' we're goin' to be reel comf'table. I kin see the topsails of the *Idella*—yes, thet's

* *Their* “faring” is the cod, but it is the principle that makes them akin.

what he calls her,—the *Idella o' Gloucester*. Them's the topsails arisin' over theer, an' I shouldn't be a mite s'prised ef he made port to-night."

She spoke so confidently that Dick looked seaward quite bewildered, but he only saw two little white clouds drifting and shifting on the horizon; and then he looked again at the face of his mother, and her glittering eyes, bright color and strange, eager look bore in upon him the awful fact that she had "gone lunny." He would have liked to sit down and bury his face in her apron and cry; but he was the man of the family now, and not only had to keep up his courage but to think, and think quickly, what had best be done.

"Don't you see, Dick?" she said, waving her hand and nodding. "Daddy's comin', an' then you kin go to school, and Mollie an' Ginnie" (these were the twins, whose "given names" were Mary Ginevra and Ginevra Mary) "kin have some little shoes an' some new dresses, an' I'll take it easy fur a spell. Gimme some of them hollyhocks here; your daddy al'ays liked to see me with 'em in my hair when I was a gell. Gimme the red ones; he says they look best with my kind o' hair,

Don't stand starin' like a stockfish, boy! Theer's the posies—under your nose theer."

Dick *did* look like a stockfish as he gaped in astonishment; for the "hollyhocks" his mother pointed to were nothing but a bunch of seaweed—kelp or pulse—of such a dull sage-green that only a mad fancy could have imagined it a bright flower. And his dismay grew when, snatching up the weed, she shook down her hair—streaked through all its black tendrils with broad bands of white,—and twined it fantastically in and out, the "Jacob's-tears" and bits of sea-grass fluttering in the wind that blew softly in with the turning tide.

"Theer!" she said. "I guess thet'll do. Now I'd better go home an' cook a mess of picked-up cod against his comin' in. He says I kin beat any cook he knows a-doin' *thet*."

And she walked by his side, talking on and on till they reached the hut; and then Dick shot off as fast as he could go to the summer hotel to ask the gentleman he had been rowing about all day to come down and look at his mother, for he had heard him called Doctor; and, on his way he asked the Widow

Bascom to go up and stay with her till he got back.

It was a long tramp there and back, but the Doctor had taken a fancy to the boy in the fishing and rowing excursions they had made together, and he came without a word. And Dick never knew till long after that he had called in one of the most famous nerve specialists of the day, and that he had been given gratis that which money could hardly purchase. Doctor M—— prescribed a sedative, and said, “Humor her, but *watch her.*”

Luckily, the madness ran in the one groove, and every day its phases were repeated with the regularity of clock-work: the morning would see her hopeful, the afternoon excited over the imaginary sails she had sighted; the evening was busily and happily filled with household cares; but the night would leave her prostrated with the disappointment. The only change apparent was in bad weather. Then she grew restless, and could not be kept in the house at all, but would stand for hours exposed to the force of the storm, her eyes shielded under her hand, peering through rain and fog for the ship that was never built by mortal shipwrights;

and any effort to take her home or to restrain her resulted in violent struggles and screaming attacks that exhausted her terribly.

The town committee took up the matter finally, and made arrangements to put her in the Asylum for the Pauper Insane, to put the twins into the poor-house till further provision could be made for them, and to bind Dick out to Seth Baxter as cabin-boy aboard the *Elizabeth Jane*. But on the morning the properly commissioned authorities came to put their well-meant plans into execution, they found the hut closed, the key hung on the door, and a badly spelled but honestly meant card asking that the "furncher will be soled to pay the rent, as we ain't got enny munney fur it."

Then some one remembered vaguely having heard of a brother of Idella's, who lived "down South, in Jersey or Virginia or some place about theer," and after some little speculation the group dispersed. A few censured the silent flitting, but the majority commended it—for there is nothing a native born American fights so shy of as a poor-house,—and all agreed that "thet boy had a hefty load to kerry." As indeed he had.

II.

OF LATE years this brother had been remembered almost as vaguely by Idella herself, as his name and whereabouts were by the good folks of Gloucester; for when she was born he was a bearded man sailing round the Horn and trading in the marts of China and the East Indies. But there was one member of the family who cherished him as a hero, and this was Dick. Ever since he had first heard of him, and though the material on which his imagination had to feed was scanty, he had erected him into such a substantial being that it seemed perfectly natural to bear down on him when, by the doctor's aid and connivance, they gave the slip to the well-disposed public officers who wished to provide for them at the public expense.

So one fine afternoon, as Jonas Judkins sat in front of his house in the town of Lewes, Delaware, comfortably smoking his pipe,

with one or two brother tars, a small, ragged urchin darted up to him and piped shrilly: "A crazy woman's a-askin' fur you at the deppo" (depot); then ran to the curbstone to enjoy the effect of his announcement.

It was not what he expected; for Jonas, serene in the consciousness that he didn't know any crazy women, and *did* know little Tic Stokes and his ways, said nothing, but went on smoking with a disregard peculiarly galling to the bearer of really stirring news.

"I say, Mr. Judkins, this is honest Injun. Thar's a crazy woman a-askin' an' a-hollerin' fur you at the deppo, an' a boy 'bout as big's me a-tryin' to hush her up, an' two little baby gals a-whimperin', an' a whole lot o' people a-tryin' to—"

"I think," said Jonas slowly, taking his pipe from his mouth and blowing aside the smoke, "that a good rope's end laid on that boy *lively* would be a blessin' and a kindness; and I, fur one, don't never grudge a kindness to a widder's son that ain't got no father to bring him up the way he should go."

And the other skippers took *their* pipes out of *their* mouths and grunted: "Aye, aye!"

Whereupon Master Tic, sorely alarmed for his wiry legs and muscular back, bawled :

“ ‘Deed an’ ‘deed an’ double deed, cross-my-heart-an’-die-like-a-dog, ef it ain’t so ! ”

Now, this along the coast is a stronger proof of truth than an affidavit, and so Jonas knew ; wherefore, laying down his pipe, he got up and walked toward the boy, saying harshly,

“ Stop your foolin’, you little sprat, and tell me what you’re drivin’ at. ” (He had no notion he was rhyming.)

“ Thar’s a crazy woman at the deppo, ” began Tic, whimpering and ducking away from the big sailor ; “ an’ she’s a-askin’ fur you an’ a-cryin’—look here, ” he broke off suddenly ; “ I ain’t agoin’ to tell you no more. I done give you the facts oncet, an’ I ain’t agoin’ to do it agin, with you a-swaggerin’ an’ a-bullyin’ me that a-way. ’Tain’t fair, so thar ! ”

And he dug eight surprisingly dirty knuckles in two aggrieved eyes.

“ Thet’s so, ” said Jonas. “ Here’s a penny an’ my ‘pology along with it. But your’re such a little liar, ” he added, with the frankness peculiar to primitive peoples, I never

know when to believe you. Thar was a boy oncet that hollered wolf—”

“I say there, Cap’n! There’s a queer racket at the deppo. You’re wanted, and wanted *bad*, I should say,” broke in a new voice.

It was one of the firemen off the evening train just in from Wilmigton; and, as he was a steady-going young fellow, of verbal habits quite different from those of Master Stokes, Judkins with a puzzled “I vum!” started for the little Gothic cottage which did duty as a station. He pushed his way through the crowd gathered in a compact ring at one end of the platform, and saw a woman wringing her hands and plucking at the arms of a boy who held her with a strength far beyond his years. Two little girls clung to each other near by, crying in a silent, suppressed way, as unnatural as it was pathetic.

“I want my brother!” she was panting—
“my brother! Won’t somebody go tell him his own sister’s here?—the one he brought the vases and shoes to from Chiny, tell him. Go quick, fur they’re a-tryin’ to take me away! I can’t git word to my husband, an’ ef Jonas don’t come, ’Liakim an’ the chil-

dern'll never know wheer I've gone to. I've lost my boy and my little gells"—sobbing most pitifully,—“an' I do want my brother. Please go tell him!”

And then she would begin all over again, repeating it until it was incoherent, and she would have to stop from exhaustion. And all the time the boy held her close, with set teeth, saying now and then, “Theer, marm, theer! Don't take on so. He'll come presently.”

“Who's a-wantin' me?” asked Jonas, in his clear, sharp voice.

“Be you Cap'n Jonas Judkins?” cried the boy, with new courage and hope lighting his face and tightening his tired arms.

“Yes. What of it?”

“Then you're my uncle, an' we've come to live with you.”

“The dickens you have!” Jonas was on the point of saying; but the forelorn group struck him silent for a moment, and then he said instead: “An' who are *you*?”

“I'm Dick Barlow; an' this here's marm, your sister; an' these is the twins.”

“Lord, Lord!” muttered Jonas, with an inaudible whistle. “That *can't* be Idella!

Why she was a baby only t'other day, an' this here's a old woman with white hair and a handful of children! What's gone o' your father?" he asked aloud, eying Dick sharply.

"He's—he didn't never come back from the Grand Banks. He went out to the trawls, an'—the—fog—"

And poor Dick, too proud to cry, too miserable to go on, stopped, choking.

"Sho now!" said Jonas. "Thet's too bad. What sort of a skipper did he hev?"—and a spark of fire burnt in his grey eyes.

"A good un," answered Dick. "He sounded the horn an' tolled the bell an' fired the old flintlock all day. Then when it got dark he sent off the blue lights. But it come on to blow that night—"

"Humph! Then he done his duty, an' theer ain't no call fur wrath fum me. But we must get away fum here. Hi there, Marshall! Fetch up one o' your teams. An' you git out!" he said unceremoniously to the crowd, who listened as eagerly to the conversation as they had stared before. "Come Idella," he went on, not ungently; "come along home."

"Is 'Liakim theer?" she asked, looking out

toward the breakwater against whose black breast the spray surged.

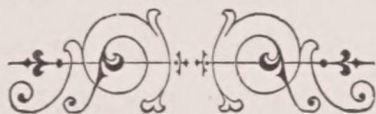
"I shouldn't be surprised," he answered desperately (though nothing would have surprised him more,) for 'a lie, big or little, yaller or brown, stuck in his craw,' as he always said of himself.

"Then I'll go," she said promptly. "You're his mate, I presume?" she added, with an interested look. "How is he? And what sort of a sailer is the *Idella*? She's a pretty ship, an' it was reel clever (good) of him to name her after me. Did he have any luck out theer in the West Injies? I hope so, fur then he kin stay to home a spell."

"What's she a-talkin' about?" asked Jonas, dismayed. And when Dick tapped his forehead behind her back, and whispered to him to agree to everything she said, he hurriedly told him: "Here, boy, *you'd* better take your ma in tow, and I'll manage the youngsters."

And he swung Ginevra Mary and Mary Ginevra up in his arms pretty much as a big mastiff might pick up two miserable stray kittens, and made for the dayton Marshall had brought, at a pace that set their little heads bobbing furiously, and impressed them with

the fact that this big uncle was another sort of "steam-car" (locomotive), differing only in degree from the one that had shrieked and puffed all day long, trailing them so fast across the country that their eyes were dazzled, and jarring them so that every bone in their thin little bodies ached.



III.

‘CAP’N” Judkins had served his trick at life’s wheel manfully, and had determined again and again to settle, as soon as “he was turned of fifty,” on a farm where cattle and crops and grass and “garden sass” were to spring in abundance all the year round—spontaneously it is to be presumed, for he knew no more about farming than any other sailor. But when “eight-bells struck”—his way of saying he was called for the evening watch of his days—he found the farms he looked at unsatisfactory. He missed something, just what he could not define; but you may guess it from his complaint: “Smells kind o’ sweet—yes, but *flat*; an’ it’s so ’tarnally *still*! Them hay-ricks and them houses hev been theer years, an’ I bet they’ll *stay* theer years.”

At last, after wandering through devious and sundry farming tracts, he fell upon Lewes, in a day when he had desperately rushed to

the sea 'to git the smell o' straw out o' his nose.' And there he could rest ; for the blooming orchards, laughing fields, and emerald grazing lands of Delaware run down to the very water's edge ; the fish-hawks carry their squirming prey over the corn tassels ; the sea-gulls pipe above the peach blossoms, and the masts of the shipping are seen between the tree-tops ; while around and beyond the break-water, away to the silver streak, the restless sea heaves or sleeps, raves or smiles, as the great winds of the Lord bid it.

But he bought a boat instead of a farm, and soon became known as the cleverest new pilot that had ever taken out a certificate among the natives ; and he had followed this trade for about ten years, when one night—it was in the November before the disaster at the Grand Banks—he was invalided for life. He was bringing in a ship bound from Norfolk to Philadelphia. She had discharged one cargo and was coming around “in ballast” for another. The sky was queer, and Judkins told the captain a heavy blow was at hand, and that he had better shorten sail. Like most merchant-men, however, she was sailing short-handed ; and, though such an order was

given, either the sailors were too slow or the wind too quick; for while they were still aloft the gale struck her, some of her top-hamper jammed, and over she went. How they got through that night is a mystery no landsman could understand.

The younger men pulled out of it with no worse result than a few scars and the loss of their sea-chests, but Judkins got an inflammatory rheumatism that stiffened his joints and made him so sensitive to cold that only "fancy work"—summer piloting—was possible. Then he leased his boat, bought a bit of ground, and proceeded to build a small house according to his own plans, all of which were drawn on the lines of a ship. There were cuddy-holes and lockers; swinging tables and fixed berths for winter; hammock-hooks and hammocks for summer; and a flag-staff and "quarter-deck" roof, with a hatchway, such as they have in Nantucket, where every fair evening (and many that were not fair) he took his exercise, with his glass under his arm, and almost tasted the sensation of again being afloat as the wind whistled or sighed about his ears.

And this was the home to which he brought

Idella and her children. With Dick's aid he tucked the twins up very neatly and comfortably for the night (after a supper that ought to have given them a violent indigestion) in one of the winter berths, and he even set a bed-board in the edge; for, although it was a fine, starlight night, with only a crisp October breeze frisking among the cat's-paws in the Bay, he felt it was stormy weather for the two poor little lasses, whose father was dead and whose mother was crazy.

The evening passed quietly,—Idella, either from bodily fatigue or the distraction of new surroundings, making no attempt to leave the house or to do her usual work, and falling asleep without her accustomed attack of crying; so Dick and his uncle had a long talk together, which made them good friends—although it was conducted on much the same plan as a cross-examination,—and gave Jonas a full insight into the history of the family so suddenly foisted on him. After getting all the bearings, and smoking out three pipes over them, he charted a plan of life that verified all Dick's dreams, and bound the boy's heart to him with steel grapples.

For several days these plans worked well,

but one Sunday morning a fog crept up the Bay and cast anchor alongside the town, and about ten o'clock Idella was missed. Jonas felt helpless for once in his life; but Dick immediately suggested "beating up" the beach, reminding his uncle how she used to spend hours at home keeping watch for the *Idella of Gloucester*. And he pointed seaward, saying,

"She'll make fur thet by her scent."

Jonas thought this reasonable, but suddenly his bronze face went white and his breath came almost in a gasp.

"Lord," he thought, "the mesh! She ain't gone a-wanderin' theer, I hope!"

A look at the boy's careworn young face decided him to say nothing, however; so he tore off a great wad of tobacco, crammed it into his mouth—to stop it,—and, chewing fiercely at it, led the way toward the beach, followed by Dick, who trotted hard at his heels, like a faithful little dog.

The white, breathless air wrapped them so close they could not see an arm's-length ahead of them; the roar of the sea was hushed—for the fog and the wind never come together,—and only the occasional voice of a

sailor in the Bay or the church bells from the town broke the stillness.

Before them out of the dimness started a fantastic shape, which they thought for an instant was the lost woman; but it proved to be Master Tic, who was spinning round and round tike a teetotum. He brought up with a crash against Jonas, then carromed against Dick, and sat down, *hard*, on the shell road.

"You little varmint!" said Jonas, angrily; "what you doin' here?"

"I'm a-practisin' my callers-thenics fur school to-morrow," answered Tic, blinking furiously. "Hullo, Dick! 's that you? I seen your ma a while back," he added, conversationally, scrambling to his feet.

"Wheer?" asked man and boy, excitedly.

"Agoin' along thar," he answered, pointing up the Bay shore.

Jonas gave a sigh of relief and started off at a great pace, not knowing that Master Tic had entirely lost the points of the compass in his whirling. And they tramped several miles before seeing a sign of life, and then it was only an old net-mender who was cobbling a seine against the next day's fishing.

"A 'ooman?" he said, peering up at them,

and rubbing the wet from his beard with the back of his hand. "Naw, I ain't seen none. Though, toe be shore, she might a-parst me in this here fog close-to. Look an' see ef thar's any prints on the sand—it's slack-water now."

But there were none, and Dick repeated once more his belief that she had made for "th' open"; and they retraced their way,—Jonas assailed again by fears of the "mesh," and Dick spent but plucky.

Arrived at the causeway that leads across the marsh, Jonas felt obliged to put his anxiety into words. But the boy answered:

"I don't b'leeve she's went that a-way; fur we ain't got no sich thing to home, an' it wouldn't be nateral fur her to go in new tracks. I sorter guess she's followed the bend o' the shore, wheer her feet'll tech sand all the way."

Poor little fellow, he was wise with the wisdom of sorrow!

"Is that so?" asked Jonas, eagerly. "Then we'll steer 'long the foot o' the Ridge here, an' mebbe come up wi' her afore she's gone fur. I've heern, aye an' knowed, of people lost in a space, 'thout compass nor log, an' they'd just go round an' round in a circle tell they was wore out."

And they went on and on, through the heavy sand, until Dick began to wonder if he wasn't having one of those dreams in which the dreamer strains every muscle and moves legs and arms in violent effort to get ahead, but for all that finds himself *planté là*. After what seemed an interminable time, Jonas, who was in front of him, stopped suddenly and started back, with a look of discomfiture on his face.

"What's the matter?" asked Dick.

"Nothin'," was the answer. "But we're midway to the Light. What's that noise?" —as a strange, sad wail drifted to their ears.

"Sh-h!" said Dick. "Thet's her now. Hear her a-singing'? Wonder wheer she is? Why, here's a house!" he cried in surprise, as a small frame building loomed up out of the mist. "Won't the folks just be s'prised when they come home fum meetin' to find marm a-scrubbin' an' a polishin' their pots an' pans!" And he chuckled. But Jonas shook his head, and the sombre look on his face deepened.

"Who lives here uncle?"

"Nobody," said Jonas, shortly.

"Land!" said Dick, with wide eyes. "I

want to know! Why don't nobody live here?"

Jonas looked around uneasily, and, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, said:

"On account o' the Crawl bein' so near."

"What's the Crawl?"

But Jonas only said: "Belay theer. Let's get your ma out, an' make fur home." And he strode ahead and pushed open the door that hung on one hinge.

Idella knelt at an open hearth, on which burnt a large fire of drift-wood; and she was crooning as she polished a tin plate half-eaten with rust.

"Thet you, Dick?" she called, cheerily. "I certainly am glad you've come in. I thought I'd got lost oncet, an' ef it hadn't a-ben fur the sound o' th' old organ out theer a-swellin' an' a-heavin' I don't b'leeve I'd a-made it. Wheer's the fish, boy, and whatever's gone with the dishes? I can't find a-one excep' this here, an' it's a sight to see."

"Why, marm, we've moved—don't you 'member? An all the fixin's is up at th' other house."

"Is thet so?" she asked, dubiously.

"'Course it is. Don't you see the cobwebs a-hangin' all aroun', an' the sand blowed in

at the windows? An' jest look at thet plate. It's a inch deep with rust."

Just then a puff of wind thumped softly in at the door, and the sand that lay drifted over the floor stirred and eddied. Jonas looked at it with a strong repugnance and said:

"Hurry up theer, boy. The locker's empty"—tapping his stomach,—“an' it must be nigh on to eight-bells.”

“Who's thet?” asked his sister.

“Thet's the mate o' th' *Idella*,” said Dick, —then he made a pretense of whispering—“an' I think he's hungry, marm.”

“O' course he is,” she said, briskly; “an' 'Liakim would think hard of me ef I let him go hungry. Won't you come home to take a bite with us?” she added turning pleasantly to Jonas. “Will the Cap'n be ashore to-night?”

“N—not to-night,” stammered Jonas, tripping again over what seemed a lie to him.

And they started out the door, to find that the fog was stirring and wavering in a wind that began to cut wide lanes and furrows through it before they had gone a mile on their homeward way.

IV.

IT WAS not only nearly but quite eight-bells* when they started; and before they reached the causeway the short October day had drawn to its close, and the three figures toiling along were the only signs of life in the strange and desolate surroundings.

Sixteen miles of sand-walking is no joke, so poor Dick suddenly sank in a little boneless heap and cried out—as steadily as he could, for his panting breath and trembling, aching muscles:

* The watches are divided into periods of four hours each, except the two dog-watches, which are only two hours long—4 to 6 and 6 to 8 p. m. All are counted off by the strokes of the ship's bell, one stroke for each half-hour. A sailor's time-table is as follows:

1 bell—1:30, 4:30, and 8:30, a. m.; 12:30, 4:30, and 8:30, p. m.

2 bells—1, 5, and 9, a. m.; 1, 5, and 9, p. m.

3 bells—1:30, 5:30, and 9:30, a. m.; 1:30, 5:30, and 9:30, p. m.

4 bells—2, 6, and 10, a. m.; 2, 6, and 10, p. m.

5 bells—2:30, 6:30, and 10:30, a. m.; 2:30, 6:30, and 10:30, p. m.

6 bells—3, 7, and 11, a. m.; 3, 7, and 11, p. m.

7 bells—3:30, 7:30, and 11:30, a. m.; 3:30, 7:30, and 11:30, p. m.

8 bells—4, 8, a. m., and 12, m.; 4, 8, p. m., and 12, m.

"Git ahead, uncle. I'll follow 'long's soon's I git rested a bit."

It was good advice, and Jonas was in favor of it; but Idella sat down by him, and, patting his hand, asked:

"Be you tired, Dicky boy? Well, so'm I. An' it's a good idee to rest. It's pleasant here, too, hain't it?"

"Whew!" muttered Jonas, "that *is* a crazy idee! I wisht to glory she hadn't took up wi' sich."

And the deepening shadows lent so much of their sombre mystery to the scene that "pleasant" it assuredly was not. The sun was dropping below the horizon, red and rayless, tangled in the last wisps of the fog; an equally red and rayless moon floated on the water-line of the eastern sky. The sea heaved in long grey rollers, gashed with a wavering line of crimson light—"fur all th' world," said Jonas to himself, "like the man-eater* we once hauled aboard th' old *Alby-tross* off o' Hayti, an' slashed wi' our cutlasses tell he thrashed and bled to death, wi' his wicked grey eyes a-gleamin', an' his jaws a-snappin'

* Man-eating shark.

like castanets when the Kachuky's* a-bein' danced."

From the shoal water rose the masts and cross-trees of seven vessels that went down with all hands aboard in the big gale of '77; the broken cordage still dangled about them, swaying back and forth in the wind as if ghostly fingers were "hauling home"; and high above them—invisible in the growing night—the sea-birds whistled shrilly, sounding for all the world as if the dead boatswains were piping their men up from Davy Jones's to sail one more race for life.

Between these mournful bits of wreckage and the silent little group of three lay the "Mesh," its ooze laced with the broad silver ribbons of the tide, now flowing in so swiftly that, even as they watched, the wide brown slashes were changed into a shivering waste of water. Back of them rose the lofty dune, that trailed its blight through the rich land; and thrusting from its tidal wave of sand were scores of blasted pines, that reflected in multiplied outlines the sea-wrecks opposite.

* Cachuca.

The wind grew brisker, and the soft whiz of the sand could be heard scudding by.

“Look a-heer, boy!” said Uncle Jonas, somewhat harshly. “Be you goin’ to set theer all night?”

Dick looked up surprised at the tone, but scrambled stiffly to his feet, and in his sturdy way began to make the best of things.

“What was it you called this place a piece back, uncle?” he asked.

“Called what place?”

“Why, this here place.”

“There’s a hull lot o’ names,” answered Jonas reluctantly. “Some folks ’round here calls it the Sand Crawl, and some calls it the Whirlin’ Dune, an’ some calls it the Sand Mountain; but I tell you theer ain’t any name that’ll fit it—’thout you call it the Devil’s Own.”

And he spat out angrily the last shreds of his great tobacco wad.

“Land o’ Goshen!” said Dick. “What’s the matter wi’ it, uncle?”

“*Ev’rything!*” was the reply. “Look at them dead men a-layin’ out theer. A. B.’s ev’y mother’s son of ’em, ’cept the cabin-boys; an’ even they died like little men here

afore our eyes, an not a boat could be got afloat to save 'em. Look at this here Mesh. What is it but th' old Hoornkille Flats, that's red with the blood of the massacree that wiped out the Dutch, an' chock-full o' quick-sands that suck down all they can git hold of? Look at that crawlin', smotherin' devil theer! Is it like any sand that ever God's sea throwed up afore? Certain'y not! Did y'ever see sand that knowed how to chart an' navigate afore? Certain'y not! Did y'ever see sand that gripped whatever it took a hankerin' fur, an' wrapped around it, an' squeezed th' life out o' it, an' chawed it an' mauled it, an' then spit it out when it was through wi' it? I bet a cookie you never did—no, nor anybody else neither, 'cept them that's seen this here—"

Aversion and anger seemed to choke him. But Dick had heard quite enough for the Ridge to become invested with a ghastly fascination, and he went the rest of the distance in a fashion that could have been most accurately described by the phrase "*barbe à l' épaule*," if his sharp little chin had not been years too young for a beard.

And certainly as the moon shook loose

from the mist and began to climb up the sky, getting brighter and cleaner the higher she went (the way with all of us), it was an impressive object, lying like one of the great dragons of legend, stretched over two miles of ground, and ending far away seaward in a lofty bluff (not unlike a head reared for a better view), on the crest of which burnt the Henlopen Light—a fiery eye that watches unwinkingly over the fate of all the poor Jackies afloat in these waters.

A dozen questions stirred in the boy's mind, but he was by this time semi-unconscious with fatigue; the last part of the journey was made mechanically, and he had to be steered into the home-door by his uncle; then he was vaguely aware of hot coffee and cold milk being poured down his throat—inside and out,—of being pulled and hauled at, and finally of being let blissfully alone to sleep, which he did from seven o'clock until nearly the same hour next morning.

This "next morning" was an era in Dick's life. He began school that day. He had a brand new suit of clothes, including a hat and shoes; and when he saw the sunshine he felt there was something so personally jolly

in it that the Sand Crawl, with its gruesome associations, passed for the time from his memory. His breakfast was eaten standing, with his precious satchel of more precious books on his back; and as he crossed the threshold there rose from the curbstone to meet him Master Tic.

“Thought I’d go ’long an’ interduce you,” he said. Then he doubled over in noiseless and prolonged mirth. “Jimminy!” he gasped as he straightened up, “*won’t* thar be a circus? Oh, no, I reckon thar won’t. Not much!”—this last derisively addressed to the world at large.

“What’s up?” asked Dick, briefly.

“Well, you see, thar’s Froggie Mason—call him Froggie ’cause he swells ’round so—he said he’d give you a good lickin’ the day you fust come to school, so’s to stiddy you an’ make you know your place. An’ I’m just a-laughin’ fit to bust to think how ’stonished he’ll be when you git that grip onto his wool you got onto mine the fust day *I* tried cantraptions wi’ you.” And again he shut up like a jackknife, while his suppressed laughter made the tears stand in his eyes.

“It’s a pity ’bout thet fightin’!” thought

Dick; "fur I wanted to git a merit mark straight along; but ef thet's the way it's a-goin' to be, why thet's the way it *will* be." All he said aloud, however, was: "Is thet so? Bring on your Froggie, an' I'll do my best fur the credit o' the family; fur you know, Tic,

" 'Hardest whacks
Is stiffest fac's.' "

At which Tic rubbed his grimy paws with glee, and smacked his lips as if he were about to eat something very appetizing.

So it happened that when Everard Comegys, schoolmaster, entered the school enclosure he saw the boys in a solid triple ring, their necks all craned toward a common centre, and the girls darting about like petrels before a gale; and he knew there was a battle *a l' outrance* going on.

"What is this?" he asked, sternly.

There was a sudden gap in the circle, but one of the big boys seized him imploringly by the arm and begged:

"*Don't* stop 'em, please, Mr. Comegys! That little Yankee beggar has just got Froggie's head in chancery, and is polishing him off finely."

“Stop this fighting instantly!” commanded the master, though his pleasant mouth twitched under its young moustache; for it was only last year he had quit that sort of thing himself, and had got the diploma that entitled him to his present dignity.

He laid a forcible hold on the two collars and pulled the combatants apart—that is, he pulled Dick; Froggie fell willingly away, for he had been terribly punished: his nose streamed blood, his eyes were shut up, and of such a color that neither raw oysters nor raw beef would save them from rainbow hues; one cheek stood out as if he had a small apple stuffed in it, and his forehead was decorated with several large lumps.

“Who began this?” Mr. Comegys asked, looking curiously at Dick, who stood passively enough in his grip, although his eyes were on fire and his hands clenching and unclosing in excitement.

“I hit him fust, ef thet’s what you mean.”

“Froggie sassed him fust,” piped a small urchin, who in his first knickerbockers felt very much of a man indeed.

“Who are you?” asked Comegys of his captive.

“Richard Barlow, o’ Gloucester, Massy-chusetts.”

“Ah, the new scholar ! Barlow, this is a bad way to begin.

“No, sir,” said Dick, respectfully enough ; “it ain’t neither.”

“Ah !” said Comegys, rather taken aback. “How do you make that out ?”

“He called my mother names,” said Dick, his breast swelling.

“What’s this, Mason ?”

“Well, she *is*,” whined Froggie through a most dilapidated nose. “*Ain’t* she a crazy Jane ?” he asked, appealing to two of his satellites.

“Ef you say that again,” shouted Dick, “I’ll bang you tell the bark’s off your hull body !”

“Mason,” said Comegys, as the situation flashed on him,—“Mason, I thought you wanted to be a gentleman ?”

“Am one,” stuttered Mason. “My father’s the richest man in Lewes—”

“And not all his money can gild you into a decent fellow so long as you think it fun to joke about the misfortunes of others. It is bad enough to laugh at their blunders and

faults, but when you jest at a person on whom the hand of God is laid you are a brute. I am ashamed of you !” he added in a voice that made Mason wince and the other boys look suddenly as if the fight might have two aspects ; and they dispersed quietly, and took their seats fully five minutes before the bell rang.

That five minutes Comegys spent talking with the new scholar, who attracted him strongly, and who outlined his pathetic story without the least idea it was pathetic, and wound up with.

“Marm *is* queer in her head, but ef she was as crazy as skeezicks I’m not a-goin’ to let nobody say so to *me*. I’m all the man she’s got to fight fur her, now daddy’s slipped cable,—an’ I’m goin’ to fight *hard* !”

Question followed answer, and later in the day, when the schoolmaster saw the boy’s intelligent face kindle as the different lessons went on, he made up his mind to “give him a chance”; and Friday evening, as the pent-up tide of children rushed roaring into the street, he said :

“Barlow, if you’d like to hear a little talk I’m going to give the boys you might come

to me to-morrow evening. There are eight or ten who will be there; they come at six and go at half-past seven. And they are the boys that have so many questions to ask during school hours that I cannot interrupt recitations to answer them all."

"How d'you remember 'em?" asked Dick, his eyes shining.

"Oh, I don't. Each one puts down on a slip of paper the thing he wants especially to know, and then they put all the slips in a box on my desk; and then we shake the box up well, and one boy, who is blindfolded, draws the first slip his fingers touch; then that question is answered first, and the second slip drawn is answered next, and so on."

"Thank 'ee, sir!" said the boy, heartily. "I'd like that fust-rate. My, you must know a heap!"

"Not more than you can learn," answered Comegys, laughing.

"Is *thet* so?" asked Dick, his sad little face laughing too. "Sure you ain't pokin' fun?"

"Sure."

"Well, then," cried the boy with burst of resolution, "I'll just hang on tell I learn it—ev'y bite, sup, an' crumb!"

V.

DICK was the first "on deck" at the school-master's on the evening named, and felt quite oppressed by the evidences of learning he saw—the quantity of books, the two globes, the small case of crucibles and retorts, and the diagrams and charts on the walls; for Comegys was an enthusiast on the subject of teaching, and in this his first year was soaring high on the wings of faith and hope. But he received Dick so pleasantly that he soon began to feel like a live boy again, and to ask a question here and there; and by the time the little "Seth Thomas" on the mantel made it six o'clock there was enough noise going for a small tea-party.

Dick studied the boys who dropped in with some interest, and recognized in all of them hard diggers—fellows that always knew their lessons, and rarely relaxed themselves during study hours even with crooked pins or "sand poppers." (This last is a fiendish instrument

that will silently and suddenly discharge a pint of sand at, in, on, or down any given point the marksman chooses.) But at the very last minute in darted Tic, as unkempt as usual, but wearing such a wide grin one almost forgave him for being bareheaded, barefooted, and bare-legged. In this last respect the bareness was unequally divided; for while the right leg was clad to the calf, the left leg could boast of nothing from the knee down except one frayed streamer, which he calmly tore off and pitched into the master's elegantly beribboned waste-basket.

The studious ones glared incredulously at Tic—the laziest boy in school; the boy who couldn't or wouldn't learn; the boy who would stand before a blackboard scratching dolefully at his head, or rubbing his nose, or scraping one bare foot up and down the other bare leg by the ten minutes; but never, *never* by any chance scratching anything on the board with the chalk, as his mother and his teacher expected him to do. Well, it certainly was just like his “cheek” to come in here with *them*!

But Comegys' welcome was unmistakable.

“Ah, Stokes! I'm very glad you came.

Sit down; we're going to begin—or, better still, you do the drawing for us."

And, according to programme, the questions were read answered and discussed until one slip came out which puzzled the school-master greatly. It was: "Wot is a werlen doom?"

"This must be your own, Stokes," he remarked at last.

"Nope," said Tic. "I didn't write none. I would-a, but I lef' my Spen-si-re-an pen an' my cut-glass inkstand at home in my escree-ter" (*escritoire?*).

And then something must have happened to one of Tic's eyes. It seemed to get out of order, for it winked suddenly and violently several times in several directions, while the other remained perfectly still.

"It's—it's mine!" said Dick, hot and flurried. "I'm afraid it's wrote bad."

"Well," said Comegys, cheerfully, "it isn't as well written as it will be a month from now, nor quite as well spelled. But suppose you help me a little with it, eh?"

"I mean," said Dick, "the werlen doom out theer by the Mesh—mebbe you'd call it the Crawl,—that eats up all it wants, an' spits

out the chews, an' goes wheer it's a mind to an' ought to be called the 'Devil's Own,'—my uncle, Cap'n Judkins, ses so," he added, breathlessly, as Comegys still looked puzzled.

"Oh, yes!" he said; "I know now what you mean, and that *is* a very curious thing. It's the only real whirling dune I ever heard of. Dune, Dick,—d-u-n-e. What is a dune? A hill of sand tossed up by the wind in a desert, or by the sea on the coast, or by both the wind and the sea, like this one. Most of them shift within given limits—move as the wind moves, grow as the tides set, or form in low ridges or flat wastes; but this one whirls about a centre of its own at the same time it is moving ahead. The motion is something like a cyclone, only the dune advances about twelve feet a year, and the cyclone one hundred miles an hour. And there's another strange thing about it: although it leaves such a tremendous trail behind it, the 'head' never diminishes in size, but goes on shouldering its big, strong way into the sea, as if it was bound to reach Cape May Light, as it will some day—"

"When?" broke in Dick, without the least idea of being impolite.

“Long after we are in the fix of ‘Imperial Cæsar’—‘dead and turned to clay,’ Dick,” answered the master, pleasantly if somewhat pedantically (he was very young). “So there you are on the dune question. Its motion gives it the name of ‘the whirling dune,’ and its slowness the name of ‘the Crawl.’”

“But what does it eat?” asked Dick, who naturally only understood about half of the explanation.

“It doesn’t *eat* anything, but whatever stands in its way gets swallowed, and—”

“Yep,” piped Tic, suddenly; “my maw says when she was ’bout as big’s me thar was a oak grove out thar by th’ Light—a ’mighty nice place fur picnics an’ junketin’s,—an’ now thar ain’t nothin’ of them trees left ’cept the dead tops a-stickin’ ’bout a foot out o’ th’ ground.”

“So I have heard,” said the master, kindly; and then continued: “Whatever stands in its way gets swallowed; and, as the whirling goes on steadily and the pressure of the sand is so immense, the trees and bits of drift-wreck and lumber are apt to show some trace of this grinding and gritting when they are

thrown out; the trees occasionally have their branches broken to the trunk, and sometimes the bark is stripped off in patches; the drift-wood is splint—”

“Them’s the ‘fang-marks,’ an’ you may bet your sweet life the ‘spit-outs’ is got ’em on *always!*”

Two of the other boys nodded at this, and even Wilson, whose geography was faultless and whose grammar nearly so, said: “That’s about so, Mr. Comegys.” Whereupon Tic, for the first time in his life, finding himself backed by a respectable majority, was so elated that he [^]lost his head a bit, and not only took the floor but the conversation as well.

“Hear that now? An’ Mr. Com-mergiss it *does* eat up what it wantster, an’ its got a *mean* [bad] temper. Don’t you ’member that little white house th’ old Portugee used to live in? Well, th’ Crawl was a-headin’ on to that ’bout—’bout a hundred year ago,—no, it couldn’t a-ben that long, but it was a awful long time ago. An’ the man that owned it moved it on rollers, an’ disappointed the Crawl of its snack [lunch]; so thar ain’t no luck thar sence. *He* got killed in a battle,

an' the woman that come, she died ; an' the Stuart boys, they got drowned ; an' th' old Portugee he went crazy, an'—"

Tic's voice had a dramatic ring to it, and he was talking to those in whose veins ran the blood of sailors,—sailors who see such strange sights as they float in the face of God, between His wide sea and wider sky, that they find it easier to believe in the supernatural than not ; so a visible sensation was gathering when Comegys said :

"That all did happen, Stokes ; although *not* because the Crawl wanted to make a meal of the little house and was disappointed, but because Gillette was a man-of-war's man ; the woman had consumption, and the two boys were upset in a squall. Did you ever hear the rest of that story ? Well, here it is. Fred and Jan Stewart were splendid swimmers, so they managed to get back to the boat and climb up on her keel ; but Jan was swept off, and Fred plunged after him, catching him by the collar as he washed past, and holding on through thick and thin. They must have been pitched against the boat more than once ; for one of Jan's arms were broken, and Fred's whole forehead was

black; but they came ashore just that way—Fred gripping Jan's collar. Every one said he could have saved himself if he had let Jan go, but that was just what he wouldn't do. And I think to die in trying to save somebody's else life is the very best death a man could ask."

And these sons of a volunteer lifeguard, such as is to be found on every shore where sailors risk their lives so willingly for fellow-men, answered in chorus, "Aye, aye, sir!" as readily as their own fathers would have done.

"As for the old Portuguese," concluded Comegys, "he had a sunstroke first, and a hard life afterward."

"Mebbe," said Tic; "but that ain't all. Thar's a ghost in the hut *now!*" And he looked around triumphantly.

"What nonsense!" said the master. "What sort of a ghost? One of Marshall's white calves, I reckon?"

"No, siree! It's a 'ooman; an' she sings an' hollers like this here" (an unearthly falsetto yowl), "an'—an'—*she rattles chains!*" (this last in a sepulchral whisper).

"But it goes wheer it's a mind to, don't

it?" broke in Dick, desperately. *He* knew who the ghost was, and what she rattled.

"No. It's only a great hillock of sand that shifts and moves by some law we do not quite understand, deflecting here and keeping straight ahead there, for natural reasons. It couldn't think for itself or plan for itself you know. And don't you remember, the ridge doesn't move or whirl, it's only the head out there by the Light?"

"I'm mortal glad o' that," said Dick. "I thought it went a-rampagin' an' a-gallivantin' wherever it took a notion—like the sea-serpint."

"Not at all. Look here, boys, suppose I take you over some Saturday? There's a chance in the trip for a lot of historical information, and we can have a good time besides," said Comegys, pleasantly. "The Light is scores of years—find how many—older than the State; it has never been out but once—find out when; and nobody knows how deep the foundation is. Look up all you can find on the subject."

He had timed his words so well that "subject" and 7:30 came together; and the boys trooped off with their interest pretty well roused between the ghost, the proposed trip, and the three points of local history raised by the master.

VI.

AND that trip to Henlopen was taken in due time, but, although there was plenty of fun and a fair amount of information got out of it, Dick's awe of the dune was increased rather than diminished; for as they rushed up the swelling mound with a whoop and yell the keeper of the light ran out, and, with warning gesture and strangely hushed voice, told them to "be quiet and move slow, fur sometimes jest one word sharp-spoken 'ud fetch a ship load o' sand a-tumblin' down off'n the edge o' the whirl; an' he *had* seen things buried out o' sight in a wink."

"*Don't* it do it a-puppus?" Tic had asked, his face so pale that the freckles actually seemed to *hover* above its surface.

"No—yes—I dunno," said the keeper. "Thar come times when I b'leeve it *doos*," and he rubbed his forehead so worriedly that Dick felt a tightening in his throat and a whirring in his little heart. "When the

Equinoctials is on the whole thing gits to wrigglin' an' heavin', tell it look 's ef it had come alive and was a-cruisin' off on its own hook. Then agin it lays thar like one o' them anny-condors in the jog-afies—a-gapin' to bolt a meal. See what I mean?" And he pointed to where the white shaft of the lighthouse stood erect and lonely in the deep bowl of the dune's whirl,—a bowl whose upper edges lipped hungrily toward the tower on a level with its second story windows.

"How much longer can the light burn afore its eat up?" asked Dick.

This shocked the keeper back to reason.

"Land o' glory, boy, th' *light* won't never be eat up! Th' *shaft*'ll go mebbe; but th' light'll burn, please God, tell His bo's'n St. Gabr'el pipes fur all them poor chaps out there to tumble up an' bear a hand aloft!

"What d'ye mean, then?" asked Dick.

"Why, that th' sand roller thar'll curve over 'fore long an' break—same ez them salt rollers down thar,—an' a'other'll rise an' break, an' a'other, tell th' lantern ain't mor 'n a story high out o' th' smother. Then th' inspector'll come along an' h'ist her up agin

clar o' th' sand, like they ben a-doin' fur two hundred an' fifty year. Ev'y thirty year or so they splice her topmast, an' time's most up fur another rise."

And after this, although Dick believed the master thoroughly with his *reason*, his *imagination* took to giving him nightmares. He would dream that the dune had left its bed in the sand, and crawled to the windows behind which his mother and the twins slept, and that it lifted its head and peered in, smacking its lips and gritting its fangs in a way that gave him the shudders. Or he would dream *he* was the light-house tower, and he could feel the stealthy Crawl winding its coils closer and closer around him, till he would spring up, fighting for breath. By daylight the phantasm and the feeling disappeared; but the mysterious quicksands that changed their *locale* with every gale, the half-ruined house to which his mother wandered whenever a brewing storm brought on one of her "spells," and the desolation of bare branches and death-dealing sand,—they were always there; so whether he saw the dune under the snows of winter or the moons of summer, or sunning its tawny length under the noondays

of August, or frothing under the winds of March, it came to be the shadow of his healthy, busy boyhood.

With fine Yankee reticence he kept this to himself, however; and so it happened that Mary Ginevra and Ginevra Mary, having nothing to dread from it, took first to following their mother to the "Portugee's cabin"; and finally, the next year, they set up their dolls and housekeeping in the same spot, gradually accumulating great treasures in shells, broken bits of bright glass, crockery, and dilapidated tin-ware.

Jonas had mended the door and windows one fair day, and the twins that spring tried to stake off a garden; but the clams' shells that marked its outlines had to be dug out so often that they gave it up in disgust, and sat among "pretend roses and *laylocks* and pinks," when the dolls needed sunning. And here they met with their first personal adventure.

It was the day Miriam Ethelinda, the oldest and dearest of the dolls, had been rescued from a violent death, Ginevra Mary having laid her in her sea-weed crib the Saturday before without properly hunting for

the pin that marked the whereabouts of her nose ; she had therefore been sleeping for a whole week on her face, which made her breathing very bad indeed ; and the two distracted little mothers dived in and out, like a pair of dabchicks, trying to revive their beloved rag darling

“What have we here, eh?” said a big voice above them. And they looked up to see quite the pleasantest face they had ever known—dark skin, red cheeks, black eyes, curly black hair, the whitest of teeth, and a pair of bright gold ear-rings, shining against a sturdy neck that rose from out a sailor-shirt, embroidered with a spread eagle on one side, and a red, white and blue flag on the other.

“A sick do—baby, I mean, mamzelles. Is it not?”

They nodded.

“Let me see : I am a good doctor, and I have a little something that will cure her at once.”

And his brown fingers went into his pocket and came out filled with candied almonds.

By this time he was sitting down, tailor fashion, gravely examining Miriam Ethelinda.

“Yes, yes: she has a fever, but I give her one little pill, so—”

“Oh!” said Ginevra Mary; and Mary Ginevra said, “Don’t!” And then they *both* said: “*That’s* the back of her head you’re poking at, ’tain’t her mouth at all. *It’s* here.”

And they explained.

He didn’t laugh a bit, but said: “I tell you she has a fever, yes; but it’s a sort of fever that can’t be cured by taking the little pills herself: *you* have to take them for her—one each, till they are gone, so.”

And he popped the candy in each little mouth, till even a far sicker doll must have felt quite cured.

Then he said: “Now tell me your names.”

And when they had generously responded by giving him not only theirs, but the names of the whole family as well, and its entire history, he told them he had two little sisters at home who were just as old as they were and had the same names—one was called for St. Genevieve, and one (here he lifted his cap) for the Holy Virgin. *His* name was René, and his ship was just in from France. He was walking over to look at the Light, and might he call on them again?

And that was the beginning of the friendship which prospered daily for a week ; and then the *Rosette de Lyons* was cleared, and all that was left in Lewes of René Lenoir was a picture directed to "*Les petites desmoiselles aux Sables*," and the loving remembrance of two childish hearts.

The picture was a cheap but very pretty lithograph of *La belle Jardinière* of Raphael, and there was much discussion about what should be done with it. Jonas didn't care much but thought it was "kind o' popish." One of the ministers and several of the elders advised its being destroyed as "dangerous." Comegys told them it was a good copy of a famous picture, and added :

"And, then, you know when all is said and done, you can't get away from the fact that the Virgin Mary *was* the Mother of Christ, just as much as my mother is mine and your mother is yours."

"Thet's so," began Jonas, when—

"You sha'n't have our pretty Lady!" suddenly declared the two Ginevras. "René give it to us an' nobody else!"

And, seizing it, they marched off to the Ridge with it, where, by the aid of sundry

pins and tacks, they fastened it on the wall of the cabin, and it soon became a part of their lives and a companion in their plays.

They acquired a habit of saying, "Good-morning, pretty Lady!" or, "How-de-do, Ma'am!" and "Good-night, pretty Lady!" arguing with each other that "'cause she was God's Mother they'd *ought* to be polite." And they fell into a way of referring disputes to her with varying results. And Idella's tired eyes found rest in the soft color and sweet face; and several times the children caught her standing before it, looking at it and muttering.

"*You'd* ought to know 'bout 'Liakim. My Dick 'ud tell *me*, an' seems to me your Son 'ud tell *you*—ef you asked Him."

That phrase, "Mother of Christ," seemed to have caught on some point of the distraught brain; and the two Ginevras, after hearing this repeated twice or thrice, began to discuss it themselves.

Mary Ginevra believed her father was dead.

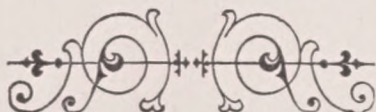
"'Course he is. Don't uncle and Dick b'leeve it?" she'd say, conclusively.

But Ginevra Mary was made of sterner stuff, and flatly denied the premises.

“That don’t make him dead,” she would answer. “I wonder if the Lady yonder does know?”

And then she began what she rarely omitted—to pop down on her little knees, either before the picture, or (when the winter broke up their journeys to the cabin) by her bunk or hammock, and to say:

“Pretty Lady, Mother of Christ, please ask the Lord Jesus to send daddy home ef he’s alive; an’ ef he ain’t, please to let us know he’s dead—*reel* dead!”



VII.

WRECKS and rescues, sun and storm, winter and summer were told off by God's great *clepsydra* the sea, and one morning Dick waked to find his sixteenth birthday had come. Such a big Dick he had grown to be—tall, brown, hard-handed, with muscles he was secretly very proud of, and a faint little fuzz on his upper lip that he was very much ashamed of, and a steady, *ready* look in his grave grey eyes that gave Jonas great satisfaction; for he had at last made up his mind, after four years of closest watching and careful weighing for and against, that he could “**tie to**” Dick,* and that the very

* On the Mississippi River, when the great lumber rafts are drifting down stream, there is often occasion to lay over night at some point, and if the occasion is emphasized by a gale of wind or unusually high water it becomes a very important matter to find deep-rooted strong trees to which to attach the stay-ropes. It is often a difficult matter, and such trees when found are accounted great blessings; so in the slang of the river a true friend and honest man is called “a good man to tie to.”

thorough training he had given the boy in practical seamanship was so well bestowed that he deserved a good rating. So that morning he made him speechlessly happy by presenting him with his own chronometer, and found a curious pleasure in thinking that when he went on the Black List there would be such a fine fellow to step in his shoes.

The twins had their presents ready too, for they were now quite young ladies—being all of ten years old,—with their hair plaited in tight little pigtails, tied, one with a red cord and one with a blue (“to tell t’other from which,” their uncle said), and fully able to do many useful things about the house, and watch over their mother with that quaint fussiness and a great paddling to and fro that readily explained the name by which Jonas often called them—the Sand Pipers. And these presents they hid mysteriously behind their backs in one hand, until with the other they had given him sixteen smacks agreeably diversified with hair pulling and pinching “to make it even;” and of course Dick said there never were two better little sisters nor two better presents; for Mary Ginerva had made him a large crab net and Ginerva Mary

had made him a needle-book in the shape of a dropsical butterfly, with red flannel wings and a green pincushion body. And Idella had either understood something of what they had told her, or had caught the infection of good wishes; for she had made a great cake, and came into breakfast dressed in the prettiest gown Jonas had given her, and with a bunch of red hollyhocks stuck in her white hair, and her great black eyes a shade less sad. It was such a very special day that everybody felt aggrieved at the abrupt ending of its pleasures.

About 12 o'clock, just as a delicious mixture of smells began to come in to Dick from the kitchen (where he was not allowed to even look), a boy came running up from the station waving a yellow envelope.

"Ketch!" he yelled, and whirled it into the window.

Dick saw it was addressed to his uncle, and knowing it must be something startling, for he had never had a telegram in all his experience, he snatched up his hat and hurried down town.

On the coping of the quaint old churchyard, where so many sailors are buried that

their brother sailors like to muster there, and smoke their pipes and spin their yarns, he found Jonas sitting with three or four cronies. But uncle and nephew were Yankees, and neither spoke nor looked surprised at the yellow envelope, which the former opened, deliberately read, and then quietly tucked away in his pocket in the midst of a slow cracking of ponderous jokes by his mates.

"Plum duff ready, boy?" he asked. And when Dick nodded, he rose, brushed the ashes from his coat and started off with him.

As they walked along, Jonas said: "Why don't you ask 'bout this tely-gram?"

"None o' my business, I guess, uncle."

"Right!" growled Jonas, with unqualified approval; "so I'll tell you. What 'ud you say to givin' up your day ashore and goin' out to speak a ship?"

"I'd say 'yes.'"

"Right again, by hookey! So I'll tell you some more. 'Member hearin' me talk 'bout Jack Hendershott?"

"The diver?"

Jonas nodded.

"Yes, *sir*," said Dick, with some excitement.

"Well, it's him."

"Is it from Californy?" asked Dick.

"No: right from New York."

"He *was* theer."

"Yes, an' I thought tell you give me this he was theer now. Read it."

And Dick read:

"If you want to speak the *Madison* from N. Y., clear Lewes at 12.

"J. HENDERSHOTT."

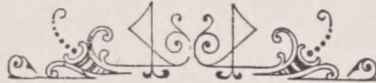
"Wonder what he's up to now? The last I heerd of him he was off to raise the treasure of the *City o' Pekin*. She foundered with a half a million o' gold in her, and a pretty lot o' Indian diamonds an' the mails, an' a hull lot o' passengers. It's cur'ous, for I ain't seen nothin' o' that job bein' done, an' Jack Hendershott's no lubber to leave a bit o' work *undone*, particularly gilt-edged work like that. No: we ain't got time to go home. It's hard on twelve now an' the tide'll serve."

"Aye, aye, sir!" said Dick. "Hi here, Stumpy! here's a penny ef you tell Mrs. Barlow that me and the Cap'n have gone out."

"A'right!" sang out "Stumpy," a short but fleet-footed youngster.

And without another word he followed his

uncle aboard, mechanically looking into the biscuit locker and water butt ; and, after the sails were set and the boat running free, took his place at the tiller in the silence Jonas loved so well.



VIII.

ABOUT daybreak they heard the short quick throb of a steam-engine, and in due time the *Madison* was spoken, and Jonas was aboard and steering her into the break-water.

She was an old-fashioned side-wheel steamer, and for some reason had taken the pilot boat in tow. No sooner was her anchor let go than Jonas came aboard with a weather-beaten man, whom he called "Jack," and treated in a way that proved him a special friend.

He was about Dick's height, but of the build peculiar to successful divers. He looked rather worn though, and his eyes were tired, and his face pallid as if from illness.

As they came along side the landing he said:

"Now, matey, ef you'll tell me a decent place to hang my hammock, I'll be—"

"Stow that, Jack Hendershott!" inter-

rupted Jonas, gruffly. "Ef it's come to that, after the cruises and bruises we've weathered together, it's time to say good-bye. You'll come to my house, or you'll walk out o' my 'quaintance, once fur all."

"Sho' now, Jonas!" said Hendershott, evidently touched and gratified. "I'll be in the way of your wimmen kind."

"Not by a jug-full," was the answer.

So Dick shouldered his bag and went ahead, securing a welcome from his mother in advance for the stranger, by telling her he was a sailor-man they had "picked up outside."

And she cooked a dinner that made the two men sniff appreciatively from the moment they entered until it was served. In the midst of the meal, when the business of eating slackened and that of conversation began, Jonas suddenly looked up and said:

"By the way, Jack, what about the *City o' Pekin*?"

Hendershott dropped his knife and fork, pushed back his chair with a hasty gesture, and, warding off the question with his hands, answered in great agitation:

"Don't never say that word agin, Judkins!

Don't never breathe it,—don't *look* it even !”

“Didn't you find nothin'?” began Jonas, in surprise.

“*Find* nothin'? It was what I *did* find that I'm a-tryin' to forgit. In the name o' God don't raise the dead afore His time—right here on the edge o' this new contrac' too !”

The last words were muttered as he wiped his forehead on quite one of the most startling “bandanas” the Presidential Campaign had evoked.

“'Course I won't,” said Jonas. And then with ready tact he began to ask about the *Madison*, and her crew and outfit, till Hendershott had entirely rallied from his mysterious horror of the *City of Peking*.

All the rest of the day the two men were closeted together, and after nightfall they went off to the house of one McPherson, a pilot grandson of the pilot grandfather who had saved the troop-ships that famous night, when the Henlopen Light for the first and only time was put out by the British in the vain hope of crippling our little Continental Army.

And after that the three heads were so often in council, and there was such secrecy

maintained aboard of the *Madison*, that the sharp wits of the summer visitors, the natives and the local reporters soon dug out the fact that there was a plan afoot to locate and raise the treasure of the *José-Maria*, a spanish galleon that had gone down in a Norway squall in the Old Kiln Roads more than a hundred years before, with her prize crew of Englishmen on board and two hundred Spanish prisoners chained between her decks.

The Northern and Western papers took it up, and at first fairly sparkled with barbed jests, and the diver and his friends were made the butts of much ridicule. But presently it became known that the *Madison* belonged to a responsible company; that a Charter for the work had been granted by the United States Treasury, which had such confidence in the enterprise that it bargained for the receipt of the brass armament of the wreck and a percentage of the treasure; that McPherson had the charts left by his grandfather, which located the exact position of the wreck; that the company had had its agents abroad for two years hunting in the Admiralty Office at London and the State Archives at Madrid for the proper identification of the

vessel; that they had the very list of the gems, the bars of silver and gold, the money, and even the rolls of silks and brocades that lay in her hold and lockers, for the Captain of the prize had mailed them at Lewes a few hours before he sailed out to his death. And later, when the doubters still clung to their disbelief, McPherson admitted to a New York *Herald* reporter that his grandfather was aboard the *José-Maria* steering her out when the squall struck her, and that he and thirteen Spanish prisoners, who were on deck taking the air at the time, were washed ashore clinging to gratings, oars—anything they could lay hands to; and if they didn't believe there was such a ship, why they needn't. But, there was her English Captain's monument set up by that Captain's "relict"—as the stone calls the widow—six months after they had sent her word the body had come ashore out of the wreck, and been buried in the queer old churchyard named above,—that churchyard where the graves heave up like a chop-sea, and the head-stones set askew, as if "the watch below" were stirring in their narrow berths, dreaming of the call of "God's bos'n—St. Gabriel."

Then the whole town caught the infection—the very children in the streets talked about it; the tone of the press changed, and not a week passed that some big journal did not send its special artist and special correspondent; the Vigo Bay Expedition was cited in support of the expectations entertained of this one, until every ship must have been passed in review. Hendershott was sketched in armor and out of armor, on shore and off shore, under the water, and in mid-air diving in the scanty attire of an Indian pearl seeker; the *Madison* was represented as a side-wheeler, a screw-propeller, a frigate, a wrecking tug,—anything the facile pencil of the “special” chose to make it; and one reporter, more enterprising than the rest, published a tabulated statement, with an affidavit attached—secured from New York’s great jeweller,—of the gradual rise in the value of rubies during the last hundred years, and the consequent enormous increase in the value of the sunken cargo, which included hundreds of these precious stones.

Hendershott’s contract gave him twenty thousand dollars the day the treasure was recovered, and his wages were enormous com-

pared to the length of his hours ; for he only worked at slack-water (making two descents a day), and he was the object of open envy and congratulation among the longshoremen, fishermen, and sailors. But he did not seem to appreciate his luck ; indeed he shrank visibly from the work, and got paler and more “peakéd” every day.

At last he came to Jonas one morning and said :

“Old man, it ain’t no use to kick agin this any more. I got to give it up. Look thar.”

And he held out his hand that was trembling as if he had a chill.

“No, it ain’t drinkin’ ; I’ve quit that since I took to divin’”—this in answer to Jonas’ quick look. “I’m a-goin’ to make a clean breast of it, tell the comp’ny, an’ then git. It’s all along o’ that *City o’ Pekin*.” And he groaned. “I wanted some money bad ; fur my Kit, she was a-goin’ to be spliced (married) to as smart a sailor as ever stepped, and I wanted to give her a good send-off ; an’ Jack junior, he got a offer of a berth as first-mate, but a big bonus was wanted, an’ so I jumped at the job of the *City o’ Pekin*, fur I knew it ’ud pay. It was easy work, fur she’d

settled on an even keel. Pretty deep? Yes; but my lungs always hev been out o' common strong, an' it wasn't more'n child's play a-locatin' of her cargo. I broached her amidships an' things come tumblin' out lively. Fust I got at her mail-bags an' the bullion; an' then the orders come to go to the purser's safe and the passengers' cabins, an' git out the jewels an' sea trunks, an' sich. *An' I went!*"

"Well?" said Jonas.

"Well," continued Hendershott, drawing a deep breath and mopping his damp face: "I never mistrusted nothin wuss'n bones, fur she'd ben down six months, an' fishes is hungry customers and clean pickers; so I tramped down the gangway, an' theer, at the fust door—swayin' up an' down in the stir of my movin', just like it was a-sayin' 'how-de-do!'—was the awfulest thing I ever sighted, man or boy, in any sea I hev sailed a-top of or dove beneath of. It *hed* been a young man, but it was swelled tell it was like nothin' words kin tell, an' the face was set in a look so—so—so *hidjus* I can't git it out o' my head sleepin' or wakin'; an' when I git down below in the divin' out yander I don't

darst to turn the eyes in my helmet fur fear o' seein' him a-bobbin' and a-bouncin' at my back, an' I hev to keep a-movin'; fur I feel as ef he was a-goin' to grip me from behind ev'y minute." *

"Jack Hendershott, that's a tough yarn you're a-spinnin'. How could a man *look* any way and he six months drowned, with the fishes a-polishin' the blubber off his bones?"

"Thar warn't a bite or a scratch on him—an' the fok'sle a-scramble wi' crabs too. Thet look o' his'n hed tarryfied 'em off, an' he was kep' thar by his foot bein' jammed. The gratin' hed slipped an' then sprung back, ketchin' him in a trap he didn't have no time to git loose fum. Somethin' like a grip-sack was at his feet, thet's the reason I know 'bout his bein' caught thar. I made one grab at it fur the comp'ny's sake, an' then I signalled 'up,' an' left fur home thet night. Thet's the yarn. You kin chaw on it, an' spit out what you don't want when you're done, but thar ain't no more divin' fur Jack Hendershott, thet's *flat!*"

And he meant it.

* This was the real experience of a diver.

IX.

IT SEEMED to Jonas like a criminal waste of opportunity and money, and he was as glad as his aching bones would let him be when the afternoon brought up an easterly gale, that blew so hard for three days and left the sea so rough for another, that work was suspended on the wreck; for he thought, "Ef you give Jack time, he'll git out o' th' Doldrums* an' sail free."

But he didn't; and before the end of the week something happened that drove everything out of the honest skipper's head except his own great trouble and the iniquity of that machine a sailor hates worse than a typhoon—the Law.

He was sitting smoking his pipe, and wondering if he could venture to broach the sub-

* A part of the ocean near the equator abounding in squalls, sudden calms, and light baffling winds that keep a ship tossing within a limited stretch for weeks a time.

ject last discussed to Hendershott; for the diver had not yet written to the President of the Company, and the announcement in the local paper that Doctor De Puy and the Board of Directors would be down the next day but one made it possible he might wait for that opportunity to tender his resignation. He had about come to the conclusion he would keep still, "Jack bein' suthin' like a sperm-whale wi' a harpoon in his innards jest now"—*i. e.*, not only suffering but "sounding,"—when a smooth voice at his elbow said:

"Captain Judkins, I believe?"

"An' suppose I be?"

"May I have a few moments' conversation with you, sir?"

"Take a cheer," said Jonas.

"Out here!" (in some surprise.) "My business is very private, and as it has to do with your affairs I do not imagine you care to discuss it on the front porch in the hearing of your neighbors."

"I don't guess my affairs kin trouble any man much, fur I don't tell 'em 'round; an' ez fur my neighbors, I ain't done nothin' I'm 'shamed fur 'm to hear," answered Jonas,

gruffly; for he had taken an instantaneous and violent dislike to the slender, supple youth who stood before him, with his beady black eyes half closed, a false ring in his careful voice, and a disagreeable half smile on his thick lips.

“ ‘The heart knoweth its own bitterness,’ ” he quoted flippantly; “and I’m not disputing it, but I *think* you’ll be sorry all the same when I’m through that you didn’t come in.”

“As fur thet,” said Jonas, “I can’t say till I hear the sort o’ yarn you’re a-goin’ to spin.”

Just then Idella appeared at the doorway, and, after looking fixedly at the young man for a few minutes, she said, quite as distinctly as if she had intended to speak aloud:

“He’s a snake. I’ll tell Dick to git the meat axe an’ chop him in two.”

“Come into the house,” said Jonas, abruptly; “my sister ain’t well, an’ you fret her.”

“Ain’t well!” muttered his visitor, skipping in ahead of him with the agility of a flea. “I should smile! She’s as crazy as a June bug.”

About an hour later Dick came in and heard high words behind the still closed door;

then it was flung open, and Jonas was standing erect, his face red with anger, his voice harsh.

"I don't, don't I? What you a-talkin' about. Why, I bought an' paid fur ev'y foot o' it, an' fur ev'y beam an' j'ist in it, wi' gold an' silver dollars thet was tried out o' the whales we caught in the South Seas the last four cruises of the *Josiah Wilkins*, an' thet we squeezed out o' the tea tradin' we done in China waters! *Title* ain't good? Why, man alive! I've got my papers slick ez a whistle, ef thet's what you're a-jawin' 'bout; an' they're recorded an' signed, sealed an' delivered this ten years."

"That may all be," said the oily youth; "but the title is *not* good, and my clients demand possession. The house of course," he added in an off-hand way, "will go with the land, as compensation for the unauthorized occupation of it through all these years."

"What?" growled Jonas. "Turn me off my own land, an' take the house over my head? By gum, you won't! nor nobody else neither!"

"It *isn't* your land!"

"It is!" shouted Jonas, advancing.

"Captain Judkins, if you lay one of your

fingers on me I'll have you up for assault and battery!" (he had got behind a table.) "You are helpless in this matter; you can't raise hand or foot. The law is on our side. But I tell you what I will do. If you will give me your note of hand drawn at thirty days in favor of my clients for \$3,000 (three thousand) cash, they'll give up their claim. If you can't or won't, they'll demand possession in sixty days. Come, what do you say? *I* call that a liberal offer, and one that lets you down mighty easy; for my expenses and commission—for I'll be your lawyer, too, for a consideration—will be all you need pay. What did you say?"

"Git!" said Jonas. "An' ef you ever come within range o' my fists agin, I'll riddle you like a collander!"

"Oh, threats!" said the little man. "They break no bones, but you have to pay dear for them. Thank Heaven, there is a law protecting honest men!"

"It won't help *you* none then!" said Jonas.

"Oh, insults! Better still. If you are not plucked to the last feather, my friend, it certainly won't be the fault of yours truly." And with a sweeping bow he left the room.

“Did you hear that land shark, Dick?”

“Yes sir. What’s he drivin’ at?”

“I dunno. He come here tellin’ me I don’t own the land I bought, an’ don’t own the house I built; an’ he showed me a lot o’ papers an’ read out of ’em an’ talked over ’em tell my head buzzed like a log-reel when the ship’s a-makin’ ten knots an hour. An’ he said his clients ’ud take \$3,000 or the house,—ez ef dollars growed on trees, an’ had on’y to be shook down, or ez ef I was a-givin’ away houses! He’s a fool—no he ain’t, he’s a knave, an’ thinks *I*’m the fool! But I ain’t; so I’m goin’ over to Rehoboth on the evenin’ train, an’ ask Judge Comegys about it. Then ef he says I’m right—an’ I know he’s a-goin’ to,—I’ll give that rascal a sock-dolager that’ll last him till the undertaker gits his measure.”

But, alas! Judge Comegys did not say he was right; there *was* a flaw in the title,—a small matter that could easily have been adjusted by an honest or a kindly disposed person, but *did* offer an opening for the lawsuit Mr. Dixson insisted on in default of the \$3,000 he demanded. And Mr. Burton and Mr. Rodney, the two best lawyers in the

town, told him rather than drag through a suit he had better give up the property quietly; he could move the house off, but that had better be thrown in; that of course Dixson had no right to his expenses from him, nor a commission, nor would they permit him to be bothered on the charge of "threatening and insulting language," but while much the fellow said was "buncombe" (empty boasting), they considered \$3,000 a really fair estimate of the value of the property; that it was a hard case, but Dixson had him "hip and thigh"; and then each of them offered his services free of cost, and the whole town gave a warm, vehement sympathy that was balm to the angry, sore old heart.

At the close of the third day of advising and suffering Jonas stood at the mantelpiece, gloomily staring into the empty fireplace; his pipe lay neglected, his tobacco-plug untouched. Dick sat in the shadow of the room, weighed down by his own helplessness and his deep sympathy. Mary Ginevra and Ginevra Mary were clearing away the neglected supper, and Idella swung contentedly in a rocking-chair singing to herself, uncon-

scious of the trouble around her ; but she sang again and again with a sweet, plaintive insistence,

“Wait till the clouds roll by.”

Suddenly Jonas started around, crying angrily, “Who struck me?”

Then he reeled and fell, his left side blasted with paralysis.

“Run for Doctor Burton, Ginnie!” shouted Dick, as he caught his uncle in his arms and eased him down ; and Mollie, not waiting for instructions, got a pillow and tugged at his sea-boots with such a good-will that they came off (upsetting her each time by the suddenness of it, by the way), and set to work rubbing his feet, as she had once seen Dick rub a sailor-man who was picked up half drowned in the Bay.

Doctor Burton gave them no hope of his recovery from the stroke ; he said he might live many years in moderate comfort, but would be of course a helpless cripple ; and he left them with a promise to come in again, and the assurance that as long as their trouble lasted he would do his best to lighten it.

This last “went without saying ;” for

whenever death or danger or sorrow comes into that end of Delaware, Hiram Burton is one of the first to step out and lead the rescue,—whether it is to take an oar and pull through a raging sea to a wreck, or to take his life in his hand and visit the ships that come into port reeking with yellow fever, or to spend his brain keeping up with the advance of the profession for the sake of his patients, gentle and simple, or to empty his purse relieving his distress. There he stands, gigantic of figure and big of heart,—a worthy kinsman of the Cæsar Rodney whose ride was as famous and as vital in its results as that of Paul Revere.

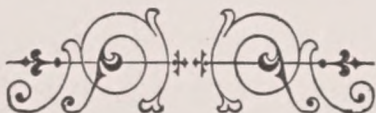
And as Jonas lay breathing slowly and heavily the evening train rolled in, bearing Doctor De Puy and the Directors of the Treasure-Saving Company, on whom Hendershott was waiting in ignorance of his friend's illness; and the black shadow lay over the house, and the future held no outlook for the anxious boy, whose brain ran riot with desperate plans and fruitless contriving for and against the evil days that were rushing so swiftly on the helpless family, whose protector he had again become.

The night wore on, but still the burning young eyes saw no rift. Toward daybreak the walls seemed to melt away, the sea stretched before him, the Dune behind him; the swelling noise of the breakers raved about him, undertoned by the deep moaning of the shattered waves as they rushed back to begin again their charge on the sands. Once more the old childish nightmare oppressed him—he was the light-house tower, and the sand-breakers curved about him, and the writhing coils of the Dune were tightening and tightening on him. His breath came in deep gasps; escape seemed impossible. Then a sweet face floated before him—it was the “Sand-Pipers’” Lady, and her eyes were fixed seaward. Following their gaze he saw a ship struggling in from the open, her fore-topmast snapped, its sails bursting away like puffs of white smoke, while the loosened yards hammered ominously at the stump, and the stays jerked frantically. Lashed in the shrouds was a man whose hair and beard streamed away in the storm. Under the bows of the flying wreck the sea churned and frothed, and the shoals were close at hand.

“Cut loose, daddy, and swim for it!” he

cried desperately ; for it was his father's face, with the shrewd kind eyes, and the long beard in which he had tangled his baby fingers "to play big horse" so often.

Then he woke, and the quiet Sunday morning was rising out of the sea, with the benediction of God for a tired world that "rested on the seventh day" in its calm.



X.

HENDERSHOTT'S grief was deep when he got back to the house as the church bells were ringing, and found what a dreadful guest had come in during his absence.

At the account of the lawyer's visit his anger was too deep for words at first, but slowly expressed itself during the day in disjointed sentences, jerked out between clouds of tobacco smoke. About seven o'clock they culminated in: "Broached-to! As fine a sailor as ever stepped; an' by a land shark, drat him!" Then: "Jack junior kin jest wait for thet air berth a while longer an' Kit kin go 'thout her gewgaws. 'Tain't the rank as makes the man, nor the riggin' as makes the gal." Then: "Them dead men's a awful big dose, and thet there *City o' Pekin* gives me the wust kind o' a turn to rickollect, but ef it lands me in Davy's own I'm a-goin' to keep on a-divin' for the *Hosy-Mari's* money-chists whether they're thar or not; an' mebbe

the pay I'm a-gittin' fum the Comp'ny'll stave off that there hog-fish tell suthin' else kin be done, an' thar's my pipe on't !”

And he solemnly laid his pipe on the table, and smashed it by a blow of his open hand, and next morning went to his diving as usual.

The whole party—president, directors, journalists, invited guests and diver,—came back highly excited Monday evening. The pumps had brought up a piece of something about the length of a man's forearm. It had been cleansed, and, after being submitted to the microscope, it was declared to be teak-wood.

Now, as the *Jose-Maria* was entered on the shipping lists of the Admiralty as “built of teak-wood,” this was accepted by the most incredulous as an indisputable proof that the wreck located was indeed the one sought; and Hendershott dreamed uneasy exultant dreams all that night of pounding Dixson's head with a bar of solid silver, while a row of dead Spaniards grinned at him through the port-holes of the wreck; and a dreadful, shapeless something wavered up and down and back and forth in the marsh, like a Will-o'-the Wisp whose light had gone out.

A few days later the grapples caught in some obstruction that would not give; but before the second turn of the tide a squall came roaring down the Bay, and, after holding for twenty minutes or so, they fetched loose, and when they were hauled up were found to be straightened out and covered with verdigris.

This made a pretty bustle, I can assure you! And the blacksmith's shop, where they were taken after being scraped and washed, was ringed-in ten deep with the tarry sailors, rugged pilots, and ragged small fry, to say nothing of an interested group of the *Madison's* officers, and several of the professional men and county gentlemen, who watched attentively as the great bellows groaned and puffed, the sparks flew wide, and the short, swarthy smith, with his leather apron, counted the seconds while the irons lay in the heart of the flame.

A young chemist, who was at the Breakwater for the fishing, joined them just as the grapples were lifted out. He gave one look, then said :

“Galvanized with copper, by Jove!”

Then there was a hand-shaking among the

officers, and a quiet explaining to the uninitiated that the presence of the verdigris on the irons meant they had gripped either copper or brass, and as the *Jose-Maria* was the only ship sunk in that part of the bay that had both in her hull (she carried brass guns and was coppered to her bends), it meant that the lost galleon would soon yield up her thousands and tens and hundreds of thousands of treasure.

But the days came and went, and still the blue clay obstinately held its secret, and the time drew nearer and nearer for the giving up of the house and land. Mr. Rodney had told Jonas that several of their mutual friends had determined to advance the money to clear the property, giving him as long time as he wanted to return it; but, while the old sailor's face twitched with emotion, he said:

"No: I'm obleeged. But a debt's a debt any way you fix it. It's a rock as'll bilge the stoutest o' ships. It's always right *thar* in her ribs, an' shiftin' the ballast ain't stoppin' the leak. Let the shark have it when the time comes, an' Dick'll manage somehow fur Idella an' me an' the Sand-Pipers."

These latter insisted on going into the

cabin to live, and sometimes Dick was half disposed to try it; but Jonas held his old horror of the Dune, and told Dick "when the time came" he would tell him what to do.

Meantime Ginevra Mary had begun a siege of Our Lady that was as unique as it was fervent; for it was a strange compound of begging, scolding, and remonstrating.

"See here, my Lady!" she said one day, "please to stop thinkin' 'bout heaven, an' listen to me for a minute! We *got* to have somethin' done, an' done *spry*, we reely *have*! The Lord was raisin' dead folks an' curin' cripples when He was livin' in J'rusal'm, so *don't* you think He'd fetch daddy *now*, an' put uncle Judkins on his legs agin, an' *kill* that man—no, I guess He wouldn't do *that* (I forgot He loved everybody, an' we got to, too), but *scare* him,—scare him *awful*, so he'll run away and never come back?"

And every day found her looking up at the sky, her eyes screwed close, her nose drawn to a button, and her anxiety dropping from her lips in some such phrase as this.

"Be you a-goin' to do it *to-day*, I wonder? My! I wish you weren't so fur off! Maybe

ef I could pull your gown you'd turn roun', an' listen *tight*" (earnestly).

God bless her! She didn't know she was pulling her gown, and plucking at her heart-strings as well, by her innocent confidence.

But still the sun shone and the waters danced, and nothing happened till the last day but one of the *Madison's* stay. Yes, in spite of the bit of teak and the verdigris, there was some quarrel about the amount of money assessed for coal bills, and some disagreement between the members of the Board as to whether dredging was not surer than diving. The dredges could be worked two-and-twenty hours, and the contents of every scoop run through a screen in full sight; while diving could be done only two hours a day and then the currents might wash away valuable "proofs" from the diver's very hands. And the upshot of it all was that the work was to be suspended till the following spring.

That evening Hendershot came home looking ill. He would eat nothing, and sat outside the door with his head clasped in his hands, shuddering now and then uncontrollably, and groaning softly to himself.

Dick found him in this condition, and, after silently mixing him a glass of stiff grog and filling his pipe, he sat down by him waiting developments. But as none came he jogged his memory.

“Have a pipe, Cap’n, an’ some grog?”

Hendershott shook his head dismally.

“Feel bad anywheer, sir?”

“I feel wuss’n ef chagres and cholera was a-pullin’ caps fur me.”

“Can I git the doctor?” (anxiously.)

“No: it’s suthin’ I seen to-day, Dick.”

Then he broke out fiercely:

“I won’t, I *darsn’t* go down to-morrow! Here I’ve kep’ myself under thinkin’ I was a-servin’ my old messmate, Jonas Judkins A. B.,—a-layin’ in his bed by the will o’ the Lord and through the limb o’ the law’s interferin’. But to-day I seen thet as makes it impossible to go over the side agin as long as I breathe—which with these here lungs o’ mine’ll be many a year—so help me! An’ now suppose the Comp’ny holds back my pay for breach o’ contrac’—they *kin* do it!—how’s the \$1,800 due me a-goin’ to help Jonas Judkins ef it ain’t paid to me?”

This was the first mention he’d made of his

intention, his motto being, "Don't count your barrels till the whale's in tow"; so Dick did not quite understand, but he asked :

"What did you see, Cap'n?"

"It was off that cussed wreck. I was a-movin' the pipes o' the pumps to whar a hole had begun to make in the clay when I looked up—I dunno what made me neither, —an' thar, not twenty foot off, an' not more'n ten foot over my head, was two sharks a-playin' ball wi' a dead man."

"Land, Cap'n! What you sayin'?"

"I'll take my davy. They was a-nosin' an' a-tumblin' of him, like you boys do of a football, an' his legs an' arms was a-whirlin' like he was a-fightin' 'em off. It turned me so sick I stepped back'ards an' got onto that hole, an' the suck o' the pump caught my foot an' most pulled it off. I wish't I'd a-ben 'prenticed to a farmer, or a coal mine, or anything that 'ud a-kep' me from livin' this sort o' way!" he went on passionately. "An' now, wi' all I've done an' suffered, here I've got to lose my money!"

"Cap'n," began Dick, softly; "Cap'n?"

"Well?"

"What do you have to do to-morrow?"

"Nothin' but put on the armor an' go down fur a lot o' gappin' fools, 'at want to see a diver a-divin', drat 'em!"

"Is that all?"

"All! It's more'n enough when you have th' extensive acquaintance wi' corpses that I've got."

"I know," interrupted Dick, somewhat hurriedly; "but what I was a-goin' to say was why couldn't I go in your place?"

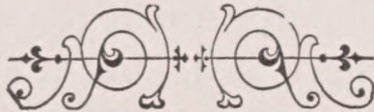
"By the horn spoon, you're a good un!" cried Hendershott. "Do you mean it?"

"'Course I do," said Dick. "I ain't a mole or a—a—porpuss, an' I've seen all you've been doin' for uncle on the sly, an' just heard this here last—but it ain't no use, he wouldn't take it; an' ef I can slip down 'stead o' you, why, I'm your man twice over! How'll we manage?"

"You leave that to me," answered Hendershott, who looked and moved and spoke like a new man; "I'll fix that. You know thar's the risk o' the pressure, Dick," he said, anxiously.

"All right," answered Dick, his steady eyes smiling; "my bargain's like the 'per-

ish'ble merchandise' notice at the deppo—
'held at the owner's risk.' Don't fret *your*
head, Cap'n Hendershott; I guess a little
blood won't count much 'side o' what you
been doin' for our folks."



XI.

THE next morning broke clear and crisp. The little rollers chased each other in shore, and the waters shifted in as many colors as the sides of a dying dolphin.

Dick made his uncle as comfortable as he knew how, gave his mother a big bear-pat on her shoulder as she sat in her favorite rocking-chair; and then, after genially pulling Ginevra Mary's pigtail plait, and pinching Mary Ginevra's fat cheek, followed Hender-shott down to the shore, where the *Madison's* boat waited for them.

His veins tingled with excitement of the coming experience, and with a certain degree of nervousness, which, while far removed from fear, was nevertheless *shiversome*. He felt curious to know how it was to be managed, but his uncle had taught him a saying: "Never reel out your line tell thar's a use fur it. Ef you do it'll tangle an' muss up. An' thet's the way wi' words. Thar ain't much

hurt done's long's they're stowed, but they bain't easy to pick up an' coil down agin."

So he kept his questions "stowed," and (as always happens to those who know when to wait) he soon found out.

The *Madison's* deck was alive with visitors, and among them fluttered the fantastic and pretty yachting suits of several ladies, whose light chatter met with enthusiastic response from the officers and civilians who danced attendance. One dainty girl about eighteen was evidently the Queen of Hearts; for whatever she ordered was done—and she ordered everything she could think of, and everybody within reach.

As Hendershott came over the side she walked toward him, calling back, with a saucy look, to the midshipman, who had just been fraying his tongue for her benefit:

"I'm going to see now if you know what you've been talking about. I've heard of sailors' yarns before, and I know they are not made of taxable wool either, so you are not restricted in their manufacture." (Her father was an M. C., whose hobby was Free Wool.) Then: "Captain Hendershott, please tell me everything you know about diving, and

all the names of the harness—I mean armor—and how you feel under water, and what you see, and all about it. Begin!”

And she folded her arms, and leaned against the taffrail expectantly.

“Yes’m,” said Hendershott, with a grin. But as he did not add anything else, she began to question him in detail, and was soon deeply interested. Presently she said:

“How shall I know what you are doing down there?”

“Well’m, you won’t,” was the answer. “But you kin guess whar I be by th’ air bubbles risin’; an’ when I’m through I jerk the signal-cord an’ up I come.”

“Pshaw! Is that all?”

“Yes’m. Onless”—and he paused impressively.

“Unless what?” she asked. “I *knew* you’d think of something.”

“Ef you’d really like to foller it ’long,” he said slowly, “I might send my ’sistant down; an’ then I could stay up myself, an’ tell you ’bout it wi’ a chart of his movin’s round. But that’s the Cap’n’s say-so.”

“That will be the very thing!” she cried, clapping her hands. “Captain”—this to the

Madison's commander,—“oh, Captain! you said I might do *just* as I pleased, didn't you?”

“Of course, Miss Edyth,” answered that gentleman, with his hand on his heart and his admiration in his eyes. “My ship and I are at your service.”

“Then I *can* send the young diver down, and keep Captain Hendershott up to tell me all about it, can't I?”

The gallant sailor's expression changed slightly at this literal interpretation of his pretty speech; but his word, though rashly given, was pledged, and all he said was:

“If Hendershott says it can be done, it shall; for Hendershott is the biggest man of us all.”

A look accompanied this, which, however, Hendershott ignored altogether, and cheerfully sang out:

O' course it can be done, sir! An' ef Miss here'll step nearer I'll name th' belts an' weights as he's a-puttin' of 'em on.”

Which he did, with a fluency that entirely hid Dick's awkwardness of movement. Then—still explaining—he helped him down the ladder and into the water without hitch or

accident, and, returning, began an elaborate description of the bottom of the Bay, the lay of the wreck, the legends told of her, the efforts made by an English frigate and a 74 line-of-battle to raise her two years after she was sunk, etc., etc.; his tongue wagging with such rude eloquence that the group of visitors were delighted, and the officers thoroughly puzzled as to what could have set the old fellow off on such a new tack; for they had always found him reticent, and hard to "tap."

As the waters closed over Dick and he sank in their icy depths, his very heart seemed to congeal, and the blood surged and beat in his head so violently as to fill his vision with broad zones and flashes of crimson light, and his ears with a sound like the drone of a wheel. But he clenched his teeth, and steadied himself by the thought of all that was staked on his venture; and when he brought up against the bottom he determinedly opened his eyes, and looked about him through the windows of his queer iron prison.

Around him reached a half obscurity that was like a twilight, only there was incessant

motion throughout its extent. Deep-sea fish of familiar shape, but enlarged and distorted by refraction, floated by singly or rushed above him in shoals of varying size, pursuing or pursued. Blue fish chased "bunkers," only to vanish in turn before their proper foe; "sheep's-head" browsed among the mussels, grinding them in their triple bank of teeth; a sword-fish spitted a porpoise; while far up a shadow took the form of a shark,—perhaps one of those Hendershott had seen "worrying" the dead man.

Death, death everywhere, and a silence so profound and so mysterious to one accustomed to God's wide sky and broad open sea that, in spite of his courage, Dick's spine prickled, and his scalp seemed to creep under his helmet.

A sense of panic came over him, and he took himself severely in hand:

"What's thirty minutes! Didn't the Cap'n say, 'jus' long 'nough to show the folks how it's done?' Dick Barlow, just s'pose you was a castaway on a desert island, an' know'd you'd have to wait a handful o' years to be picked up and took home? *That'd* be some-thin'. Or s'pose you was a-floatin' on a spar

in mid-ocean, and never a sail in sight? *That'd* be somethin' too. Or you was adrift on a iceberg, same as old Tyson that time, wi' th' North wind a-blowin' a gale? Why, man alive! aside o' those s'posin's, this here's a summer picnic, wi' a brass band, an' free ice-cream throwed in! I'm shamed o' you, I cert'n'y am! Now, let's do another kind o' s'posin'. As long's you'r' down here, s'pose you take a look at the *Hosy-Mari*, an' s'pose you—Hello! them theer pipes have washed off o' the wreck, an' the pumps ain't suckin' up nothin' but water. I must fix that."

And he scrambled up on the long mound of clay that cased the hull of the wreck, caught the pipes that were hanging over the side, and was putting them down where he stood, when suddenly he remembered what Hendershott had said about a hole that was making.

This he looked for and found readily, for it was very "sizable." Then he set the pipes over it, holding them near together, and steadying them with his hands; forgetting the enormous power of the pumps above him, and that they were gathering "way" with every stroke of the piston, until an unguarded

movement on the "scoop-out's" slippery edge made him lose his balance, and in a trice he was on his back in it, with one of his feet drawn, twisted, held immovably, and a sensation of cracking muscles and bending bones.

Like Hendershott, he too was caught in the "suck"! He turned as nearly over as he could, and, digging his fingers into the clay, made desperate efforts to break loose. He drew up his free knee, and bore away on it again and again, but it slipped from him every time. He tried with one hand to shift the weights toward his imprisoned foot to bear it down, but they were immovable. He struggled and kicked with all the force of his tense young muscles, when to his horror he felt a giving-way under him, and he sank into the hold of the old wreck.

The last thing he remembered was grasping frantically at whatever he could reach to stay his descent, touching something that stirred in his grip, and then giving a cry that thundered back in his ears from the walls of his helmet; for he thought it must be a bone—maybe the hand—of one of those dead Spaniards who had gone down to their death like

rats in a trap, and whose skeletons still hung in chains 'tween decks!

The next thing he knew he was on the deck of the *Madison*, flat on his back, his head on Hendershott's knee, a pretty girl kneeling beside him, and a cluster of kindly faces grouped, apparently in mid-air—for his sight and senses were still confused.

"Lord, ain't I glad to see your masthead lights agin!" said Hendershott—by which fine figure he meant Dick's eyes,—and he heaved a sigh of relief that was a young breeze. "How d'ye feel, boy?"

"Oh, I'm all right!" said Dick, but his voice was feeble.

"Is he, Doctor?" asked Hendershott, appealing to the ship's surgeon.

"Well, I wouldn't let him go diving again to-day, Hendershott," was the answer. "But don't be scared at that blood—there's none of it from his lungs. It's all from his head and throat."

Blood? Dick put up his hand mechanically and passed it over his face. It reeked like a butcher's.

"Who did it?" he asked, wonderingly.

"Nobody, boy; it was the pressure o' th'

water, an' th' closeness o' th' helmet. I hadn't oughter let you go down," groaned Hendershott, remorsefully. "Why didn't you pull the cord sooner?"

"Cord?" said Dick. "I—I forgot theer was a cord." And he was going to put up the other hand to rub his stupid head, when he sat up abruptly, and cast something from him. It fell on the deck with a crash quite disproportionate to its size, for it was the object his fingers had closed on.

The whole scene had rushed back on him, and struggling up on his sound foot he saluted the Captain of the *Madison*, and began:

"I got a hold o' that theer, sir,—" when Hendershott interrupted:

"But you *did* pull th' cord, you jerked it so furious we hauled you up a-hummin'." (You see he was not a man-o'-war's man, so to him captains were not such awe-inspiring creatures as they ought to be on their own quarter-decks.)

"No, sir, I didn't," said Dick, modestly but firmly; "I only wisht I'd 'a' thought of it. It'd 'a' saved me from gittin' hold o' that when I broke through."

“Broke through what?”

“The wreck.”

“Whew!” said Hendershott, with a gesture of dismay; “his head’s clean gone.”

“No, sir, it ain’t! Theer’s the provin’.”

“What?”

“Thet—thet—bone,” pointing with keen disrelish to his find.

“*Bone!*” There was a whole sheaf of exclamation points in Hendershott’s voice, and the Captain himself interrupted:

“What do you mean?”

Then Dick told him how he had gone aboard, and the consequences; adding, “An’ I thrashed ’round so in the scoop-out that I busted through the *Hosy-Mari*’s upper deck—theer must a-ben a old hatch or suthin’ handy; an’ while I was a-scratchin’ tooth-an’-toe-nail to keep from droppin’ I didn’t know wheer, an’ amongst I didn’t know what,—that is,” corrected truthful Dick—“I mean, sir, ’mongst them dead Spaniardses’ bones, I got a-hold o’ one o’ ’em. An’ theer it is.”

“Pretty heavy for a bone,” said the Captain, as he balanced it in his hand. “Here, Mr. Bayne, will you test this, please, sir?”

Not that he believed Dick’s story, for he

knew the hallucinations produced by any undue pressure of blood on the brain, but it was his duty to thoroughly investigate everything the pumps or divers brought up, even if it were the last day of his detail.

Then every body gathered around the boy, and made him repeat it all until he was hot with embarrassment, and overwhelmed with mortification to think he had "ben doin' women's trick—a-faintin'."

It was a delightful episode to the guests, and they took sides almost violently as to the upshot of the adventure. One faction, led by Miss Edyth, insisted the treasure was actually recovered, and that volatile young person assumed the whole credit of the affair.

"Just fancy," she said to the Captain, "if I hadn't sent him down it wouldn't have happened! I think it's the most romantic thing I ever heard of. Oh, *do* go below, and see what has become of Mr. Bayne and the bone!"

And he went readily; for Mr. Bayne had been below quite long enough to detect the stone, or bit of drift-wreck, or ancient clam shell, which the find would of course prove to be.

A strong smell of chemicals stung his nostrils the chief element being the deadly fumes of nitric acid. Burying his nose in his handkerchief, and stirred by an excitement he refused to acknowledge, he pushed ahead to the state-room out of which the vapors floated. There stood Bayne in his mask, bending over the wash-stand, pale and eager, the find in one hand and the bottle in the other. The latter was tilted, and the precious stuff was slowly gathering to drop.

He halted. The globule of liquid grew larger, then flashed a moment in the light and fell. Another and another. Then :

“By the living Lord !” he heard Bayne gasp, in an awestruck tone.

“What is it, Bayne?”

And he, turning, answered solemnly :

“One of the ‘100 silver virgins’ of the *Jose Maria’s* invoice.”

The treasure was found !



XII.

THE first impulse and desire of the officers was, of course, to get rid of the guests ; but the captain realized the wisdom of detaining them until it would be too late for them to spread the news of the find that night at least. So he sent for the steward and told him to spread as pretty a lunch as he could get up at short notice, and to serve the courses as slowly as possible, then to hunt up a fiddler among the men for a little dance afterward.

The ports were all opened and a ventilator rigged, so as to clear away the fumes of the nitric acid, and then lunch was served.

As soon as they were seated the captain said :

“Ladies and gentlemen, I take great pleasure in announcing to you that we have brought up a valuable bit of the *Jose Maria's* treasure. Here it is—an ingot of silver, molded roughly into the semblance of a

woman with veiled head and flowing draperies ; and here is a copy of the old invoice that the English captain mailed the day he was drowned, which identifies it as one of the '100 silver virgins' forming part of the galleon's cargo. Examine them at your leisure—there's no hurry in the world ; but permit me to leave you in charge of Lieutenant Bayne, for I have despatches to send and orders to give."

The statuette was handed down one side of the table and the paper down the other ; at the foot they "swung corners," crossed over, and came back on opposite sides—quite as if they had been doing a figure in a quadrille—under a heavy cross-fire of questions, exclamations and congratulations.

Once on deck the captain called Hender-shott aft and conferred for a few minutes, jotted down several items, and said shaking hands with him warmly,

"It's a good day's work for you, Hender-shott. You know the bargain was twenty thousand dollars the moment you touched the treasure—"

"The boy must git his share of it," broke in the diver, anxiously.

“That rests with you entirely; for you employed him, and a man may do what he will with his own. You’ll go down at slack-water of course? It’s a pity he can’t be with you until these—five, you say? Do you want all *five* of these men telegraphed for?”

“Aye, aye, sir! an’ even then the wreck’ll be a handful. See them mare’s tails* a-whiskin’ over yonder? Well, that means a blow’s a-brewin’, an’ you want to clar out the hull afore she gits here.”

“Why? She won’t be apt to go to pieces, and her copper cradle ought to hold things snug. You see I’m only authorized to employ such outside help as is actually necessary.”

“She’ll hold fast enough in that stiff clay, but the copperin’ ain’t a-goin’ to keep the sea out a-top wheer the boy bust through; an’ fust, you know, if a Nor’-easter comes snorin’ along here, a current’ll set up that’ll scoop her same as a big hand would! ‘Sides that, the silt’ll be runnin’ in an’ fillin’ her up.”

“You’re right,” answered the captain,

* Long, plume-like clouds that float up in advance of a storm.

scratching away vigorously with his pencil for a few minutes, and then handing him a handful of telegrams. "Take the dingy and go ashore with these, will you? See them sent yourself, and bring back the duplicate blanks. And I say, Hendershott, come off as soon as you can; for you've made me feel as though there were a ship-load of pirates alongside, stealing the treasure under my very nose."

So Dick and the diver tumbled into the dingy and pulled ashore right enough, but for the former landing was quite another question. His foot was swollen to the size of a cantaloupe, and striped with great bruises, while the partial dislocation made walking an impossibility.

"Better hev a lift, Dick," said Hendershott.

"Don't see e'er a wagon handy, sir."

"Lemme git one. I'll stand treat."

"No, sir," said Dick; "I guess I bain't as beat as that."

"All right," said Hendershott. "I ain't proud, *you* kin git th' turn-out!"

Dick smiled pretty successfully for a fellow in such pain.

"What you a-grinnin' at?" growled the diver. "Young fellows with bank accounts ought to be willin' to give an' take."

"Right you are, sir," said Dick; "an' ef I was one of 'em you should have a coach-an'-four, wi'—"

"You *be*," interrupted Hendershott, gruffly.

"What you mean, sir?" (in blank astonishment.)

"Why, you've got five thousand dollars o' your own!"

"Land, Cap'n, I ain't got five cents!"

"S'pose I don't know how to tell the truth?" (with every appearance of indignation.)

"'Course I don't s'pose any such a thing!" answered Dick quickly, thinking in *his* turn that Hendershott had lost *his* head.

"Then don't conterdict, but draw on your 'count."

"Wheer is it, Cap'n?" asked Dick.

"In the bank at Philadelphy."

"Wheer did it come fum?" (thinking to humor his fancy.)

"Fum the Comp'ny, for findin' the *Hosy Mari's* treasure."

“Sho’ now, Cap’n!” said Dick; “thet’s all yours.”

“’Tain’t!”

“Why, *I* did’nt do nothin’—”

“’Cept find it.”

“But, Cap’n—”

“Young Dick, shet up! Ef you hadn’t gone down to save my skeered old carcass a shiver an’ my rep’tation a ruinin’ it wouldn’t a-ben found at all.”

“But, Cap’n, I done it for you, free an’ willin’.”

“S’pose I don’t know that? Now belay your chin-music, an’ don’t quarrel wi’ your luck.”

“Five thou-sand dol-lars!” said Dick, softly to himself. “That’s a mortal lot o’ money!”

“Not too much for what’s wantin’ at home just now,” broke in Hendershott.

“Cap’n, it is, an’ it ’ud be downright wicked. I can’t do it. Make it three thousand, if you will, an’ I’ll thank you on my knees; fur that’ll square up the world fur Uncle Judkins, an’ marm an’ the Sand-Pipers; an’ that’s all it’s needsome to think ’bout.”

“Young Dick, I wouldn’t a-bleeved you’d make such a nat’ral born idjit o’ yourself—an’ you ownin’ a chronom’ter o’ your own, an’ able to take the sun wi’ the best, too! Whar’s your start money comin’ from, when you want to foot a deck o’ your own some day? Whar’s—”

“Cap’n, you’re—you’re” then he stopped, waving his hand with a large comprehensive sweep not at all inappropriate. “I’m took flat aback wi’ all sail set! I ain’t got any words that’ll—”

“Ef you say another one I’ll fetch you a crack over the head wi’ these rowlocks that’ll non-compass* you sure. Then I’ll app’int myself guardeen an’ settle th’ estate. You see this here law talk’s ben so improvin’ I know just what to do.” Then he chuckled hilariously as he poked Dick in the ribs and asked :

“What you s’pose that land shark’ll say when he sees you a-shovellin’ out the dollars? He’d better be a-huntin’ up a hole small enough to fit him, an’ when he’s found it crawl into it quick ; fur if I catch up wi’ him

* He had heard the phrase “*non compos mentis*” and liked it.

I'll frazzle him to oakum !” (This last with a growl like an angry old sea-lion.)

Just then one of Marshall's daytons drove by, and Hendershott hailed the driver, explaining Dick's hurt and bundling him in with a strong hand. Then he hurried to the telegraph office, and from there to the house, where between them they told their exciting story.

Jonas said nothing at first, but he gripped a hand of the boy he had raised and of the friend he had grown to through years of blow and shine, holding them both in his own sound one ; and as he looked at first one and then the other, with a gaze as deep as his emotion, these words shaped themselves slowly into sentences :

“Dick, you're bread on the waters. Jack, the pole-star ain't no truer'n you be. Here I ben a-mutineerin' ever since th' Lord put me in th' brig,* an' clapped His irons onto my leg and arm. I ben a-callin' it all onjust trouble, an' seein' nothin' but the blackness an' the deadness of it, when I'd ought to ben hangin' hard to th' weather brace an' trustin'

* The ship's prison, the place of close confinement.

to His steerin'. An' just when 'twas 'breakers ahead an' th' wind dead astarn,' along comes God for us all, same as when He was back yander in Galilee a-layin' the winds and waves fur them others o' little faith."

And Dick said: "Aye, aye, sir!" very respectfully; and Hendershott, with vague memories of the few times he'd been beguiled to "chapel," gave a deep-throated "Amen." And then they shook hands, and were about settling down when in dashed the Sand-Pipers.

A few words gave them the gist of the news, and then Ginevra Mary showed her metal. With a shrill "Hooray!" she pounced on her open-mouthed twin, and, shaking her vigorously, said:

"There, Ginnie Barlow! What'd I tell you? *She's a-beginnin'!*"

Then she flung her arms around Jonas' neck, crying triumphantly:

"What you think of my Lady now, uncle? Ain't she a bird, an' a darlin' an' a dear? She'll be helpin' *you* next, I guess."

And she laid her fresh, rosy cheek against his grizzled brown one and kissed him explosively. Then she charged at her mother,

who appeared in the doorway, hugging her like a young grizzly, and bearing her down into the nearest chair by her impetuosity.

“Just you wait, lovey ! I’m prayin’ tight’s ever I can, an’ so’s Ginnie—on’y hers is fits-an’-starts,—fur somethin’ you want awful bad. *She* knows, an’ I’m most sure she’s a-goin’ to help us !”

The light of faith shone so clear and strong in her eyes and her tone was so assured that Idella’s wandering attention was arrested ; she made a puzzled effort to understand, but after a few minutes she smiled gently, and, patting the hot little shoulder that heaved and panted on her breast, said :

“Theer, theer, mother’s baby ! Don’t take on so ; daddy’ll come soon, an’ then ev’y-thing’ll be smooth sailin’.”

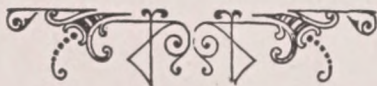
“Won’t it though ?” was the fervent answer. Then : “Come ’long, Ginnie !”

And out they both darted to the Dune, their flaxen pigtails whisking “seven ways for Sunday,” with the speed of their flight. In an incredibly short time they were at the cottage, puffing and panting out their thanks to Our Lady before her picture.

Mary Ginevra's included a very sincere apology :

“ ‘Scuse me, my Lady, for not bein’ as set as Mollie ! But she is so brash an’ perky ’casionally thet I *hev* to go contrairy, else she’d ride all over me. I don’t mind,” she added hastily, “ fur I’m dowright fond o’ her ; but I git pernicketty sometimes myself—I won’t be again though—’bout daddy’s comin’ home. She shall hev her own way right ’long now as fur as that goes ; an’, hopin’ you *will* ’scuse me, I’ll plump my prayers in wi’ hers. Could you bring him ’long soon ? Fur, O my Lady ! waitin’ fur what you don’t feel sure o’ gittin’ is hard and lonesome work ! ”

And a whole college of cardinals could not have gainsaid that last or put it more neatly.



XIII.

THE scene with Dixson fully realized Hendershott's expectations, and gave that slippery young person his first perception that perhaps, after all, honesty and integrity were better in the long run than sharpness and unscrupulous quibbles; for the settlement of the claim was made a very imposing occasion, Judge Comegys, Mr. Burton, Mr. Rodney and Doctor Burton being present to see their old friend safely through, both legally and physically.

The dignity of these gentlemen, the stately ceremony with which they froze their scampish young brother, and the calm deliberation with which they scrutinized the papers, deeds, etc., pointing out one or two carelessly copied clauses, and suggesting their correction with a citation of statutes and rulings that rang sonorously on the air,—all made it a very trying hour for him; but this discomfort was as nothing to that he felt when he found himself sandwiched between Idella's

sombre eyes and Hendershott's angry ones. He knew lunatics were very sudden, and he trembled for his worthless body as if it had been really valuable; and he also noticed sundry movements of the diver's fists that made curious little crinkles catch his muscles and quicken his breath.

The climax of the diver's satisfaction was reached when the moment of payment came, and the judge asked as a matter of form:

“Are you ready to meet the debt?”

Jonas bowed silently and looked at Hendershott, who was fearfully and wonderfully rigged in a suit of black broadcloth, and wore a collar so large and stiff that he literally could not turn his head; he could nod it though, and this he did with an emphasis that focused every eye in the room upon him, as he waved his hand toward the inner door, saying,

“Dick, No. 1!”

Dick rose, and presently a rumbling sound was heard, and he came in trundling a wheelbarrow, in which lay big bags and little bags, loose silver and *rouleaux*. He set it down before Dixon, to whom Hendershott ordered:

“Count it!”

This he did—fifteen hundred dollars.

Then Hendershott said :

“Dick, No. 2 !”

And Dick wheeled in a second load, at sight of which the diver grinned, and Dixon cried out angrily :

“I can’t take all this silver ! It’s ridiculous to expect it.”

“Then you kin leave it,” answered the diver. “Nobody’ll cry, I guess.”

“But,” fumed Dixon.

“But,” mimicked the diver, “look a-here. You’re a nice one, you are ! Thar bain’t no suitin’ you ! Fust you come a-howlin’ fur money we didn’t owe, and kicked up a rumpus cause it wasn’t paid ; an’ now we gone an’ paid it, you’re a-tryin’ to raise another.”

“I’ll have to hire a wagon to take it away !” said Dixon.

“We’re willin’ you should,” answered Hendershott, cheerfully.

“Gentlemen, is there no protection for me against insults in the discharge of my duty ?” (turning to the judge and his companions.)

“We’re not aware any have been offered, sir,” was the courteous response.

“But see how I’m paid!”

“There was no special form of payment demanded was there? I understood that the sum total alone was designated.”

“Well, who would have guessed they’d raise it?” (rudely.)

“That’s scarcely to the point,” said the judge, dryly.

“It’s a conspiracy! I can’t handle these miserable—”

“They ain’t miserable!” interrupted Hendershott; “not by a long chalk, they ain’t! They’re good 100-cents-to-the dollar bits o’ pure silver! I’d ought to know; fur ain’t I ben a-bitin’ of ’em, an’ had Dick a-bitin’ of ’em an’ the twins a-ringin’ of ’em right along, tell our jaws ached, an’ the little gals was dead beat? An’ now, young man, sign that recipe (receipt?), and git! We’ve had enough o’ you, an’ a sight too much. None o’ your lip! When I say ‘git!’ I mean it, an’ it’s a heap healthier than stayin’. Thar’s the door!” (swinging both arms toward it in a way highly suggestive of pitching something out.) “Dick, guess we’d better save manners an’ speed the partin’ guest; bear a hand thar, an’ I’ll come ’long too.”

And they trundled the barrows out and down the street to the station, where Dixon, after much struggling and more swearing, got the contents boxed and expressed amid a far-off but audible atmosphere of tarry laughter and barbed jokes.

The memory of it was a sweet morsel to the diver; and whenever, in the busy days that followed, he could spare time to smoke a pipe, he'd mutter between puffs :

“Three thousan's thirty hundred—thirty hundred o' them cart-wheel silver dollars! Wisht I could a made him carry 'em on his back! Land, wouldn't he-a sagged under the weight! Wisht I could-a made him take a sep'rate trip fur every single one of 'em, an' walk both ways! Jack, you done a fancy stroke that time, and don't you forget it!”

And then he would chuckle, wink at whatever his eye struck, and go back to work greatly refreshed.

XIV.

WHEN a rain is over and the first ray of sunshine pierces the gloom, have you ever noticed with what magical rapidity the light broadens, the clouds roll themselves off the scene, and the sky resumes its unbroken arch of blue? It is like a stage transformation in its swiftness and completeness. That was the way with the troubles of the little household by the sea. Once the rift was made, events marched so rapidly they scarcely found time for breath between the happenings, and furnished abundant material for all the fireside and newspaper story-tellers in the state and county.

It was this way. November had come, and had dropped in the world's lap a few days so beautiful and mild that the children went wild, the late birds thought second thoughts about migration, and a few flowers and butterflies nodded and danced in the soft air and warm sunshine. The women brought their household tasks out-doors, windows were thrown open, and fires put out. But the old

men shook their shaggy heads and would "take no stock" in it. "Weather-breeders!" they growled, and rose and sat stiffly with the aches and pains that fly before a change. "Weather-breeders; an' it'll be 'fare-you-well, my Mary Anne!' when once the wind does slip cable."

And the event proved them right; for on the evening of the 6th, the sun went down in a wild smear of red, and there was a metallic ring to the surf as it hammered on the beach. Ship after ship came running into the harbor, and each reported other sail crowding after. By daybreak those that got in did it by dint of sheer pluck and luck; and by ten o'clock all the able-bodied men in town were huddled on the sands, watching a brigantine and a bark that were struggling desperately to claw off the shoals, about which the sea bellowed and roared and the foam flew like a snow squall.

The bark was well handled, but something seemed amiss with the brig, and she made leeway so fast that the swiftest runner in the crowd was sent back to Lewes to telegraph the life crew at Rehoboth to "limber up" the boat wagon and come along.

Did you ever watch a ship going to her death? The waves lash her stern and sides till she shudderingly labors up the green ridges that fling their tons of water on her; she trembles on the crest like a sentient creature; then she makes a shivering plunge, and lies groaning in the trough of the sea until goaded up another height; her anchors clutch at the bottom like the fingers of a drowning man; she tries to spread her broken wings; she shakes off every burden that can be spared from cargo and armament. But all the time she crawls nearer and nearer the white death under her bows, until with a sudden leap she's hard aground, and then the wind and sea fall on her and tear and rend her to pieces.

As the brig took the ground a half groan went up, and a great restlessness pervaded the crowd until the life-boat hove in sight,—the horses galloping, the men clinging with hands, feet, arms, legs, even teeth—anything that would grip and hold. A horse fell winded, but they cut the traces and left him; another staggered and rolled over; they left him, too; volunteers sprang from the group on the sands, and men and horses dashed on

the beach with a yell and a whinny that brought a faint response from the wreck.

The crew were called. All answered until "No. 4"—Job Ransom. Then an unfamiliar voice made the captain look up. But when he saw it was a sturdy fellow he let the boat go; for a small swivel was fired from the wreck, and the foremast was bending like a whip.

"Ready?"

"Aye, aye!" And with muscles of iron and hearts of steel they leaped at their work.

As they rushed through the bursting surf with the boat and scrambled over her sides—she rearing and plunging like a bucking bronco,—put out their oars, and laid their backs to it with a will, a strange feeling of impatience took possession of Dick. He was conscious of an almost uncontrollable desire to double his stroke and to storm at the men—all his seniors—because they pulled so deep and slow. The death-waves* seemed to him to bear down on them in groups instead of singly; and when the intermediate seas burst under the bows of the *Petrel*, mak-

* Every ninth wave; so called by sailor on account of their size and power.

ing her toss her nose into the air or burying her under their floods, he groaned aloud with vexation at the time lost in recovering "way." His head was as if set on a pivot, and turned so often and so restlessly toward the wreck, that Truxton, the stroke, supposing him to be nervous as to her fate, said kindly :

"All right, Dick. She'll hold together till we get her crew off, anyway. Don't fret."

"Glad o' that, sir," answered Dick. But still his muscles quivered so strangely that, as the little craft slid uncertainly down a transversely rolling sea, the captain had to call out :

"Steady there, No. 4 ! Steady !"

Then he buckled down to work so resolutely that the next minutes of roar and smother, and shock and struggle, laboring oars and panting breath, blinded vision and deafened ears, seemed interminably long, and yet incredibly short when word was passed to "ease up," for they were as near the wreck as they dared go.

The moments that followed were filled with the noblest joy and deepest regret that can come to true men,—the joy of saving life, and the pain of seeing it snatched back from

their grasp ; for two poor fellows were washed from the line and swept to their death with wild white faces, and outstretched arms that grasped nothing but the unstable waters ; and another was dashed so violently against the ship's side, just as he cleared the taffrail, that he fell senseless into the current and was whirled to a deep-sea grave.

Dick had never been out in the life-boat before, but he felt as if he were taking part in a set of perfectly familiar scenes, each one of which he knew in detail before it happened. The brig was absolutely a strange vessel to him, but he recognized her every line and spar. Her foretop-mast had snapped off short, and the sails were bursting away like puffs of white smoke,—he knew they would. There was something in the shrouds —“a piece of sail,” one of the boat's crew had said ; but he knew better. And when a sudden stir made him aware that the mainstays and braces had given, and the mainmast was splitting and wavering for a fall, he suddenly sprang erect, and hollowing his hands about his mouth, shouted :

“Cut loose and swim fur it, daddy !”

The man in the shrouds raised his head,

which had fallen forward on his breast, and looked about him,—his long grey hair and beard streaming in the gale.

Dick repeated his cry, excitement making his voice as clear as a trumpet and nearly as strong. And as he did so:

“That’s right, young un!” came from one of the rescued men. “If ever a one of us ought to be saved it’s that old codger. Nussed us through Yellow Jack* at Montyvidday o last summer, and’s taken extry night-watches time’n again—had ’em three nights hand-runnin’ this spell—for we was all broke up with handlin’ the spars and sails, half of us bein’ gone to Davy Jones. Last night he lashed himself thar for a lookout. Hooray for the old man!”

And they broke into a cheer that made up in intention what it lacked in volume.

Simultaneously with it Dick siezed a line, plunged over the side, and, stayed up partly by the big cork jacket that forms a portion of the life-boat uniform, and partly by the excitement that raged in his veins, he swam for the wreck as “the old man” took out his sheath

* Yellow fever.

knife, cut the lashings, and sprang into the water—not a minute too soon; for the mainmast gave and fell, crashing against the stump of the foremast, carrying it down in the same ruin. Heaven favored Dick's rashness. The current and wash tossed them together, and after some hard hauling they were both pulled inboard and the boat headed for shore.

On the way back the boy sat in a half-stupor, mechanically dipping his oar, and occasionally pulling hard to trim the boat when the transverse seas "chopped" the water under her; but his strength was spent and the unnatural excitement gone. He tried to get a look at the man he had rescued, wondering what in the world had made him call out as he did; but the poor fellows had already tumbled down wherever they could fit, and some of them were actually asleep from exhaustion.

As they landed, a dozen willing hands beached the boat, and a hundred throats roared a welcome. Then an old greybeard sang out:

"Another for the barkie!"

And that, too, was a "peeler"; for the bark had thrown out anchors and grapples; some

of them were holding, and she was riding hard but safe, with six feet of water between her keel and the bottom.

As the sound ceased "the old man" turned to Dick.

"What be your name?"

And Dick, like a real Yankee, answered:

"And what be yours, sir?"

"'Liakim Barlow, o' Gloucester."

"I knew it!" cried Dick, with a knot as big as his fist in his throat. "O daddy, daddy, I'm Dick!"

Then he must have forgotten he had a fuzz on his lip and a deposit in the bank,—that he had done a strong man's work that day, and had the biceps of a blacksmith; for he threw his arms around his father's neck and kissed his bronzed face a dozen times, just as he used to when he was a little chap. Then they gripped hands in a way that would have made you and me cripples for life, and looked at each other till each was hid from the other by a salt mist—maybe from the flying scud outside.

Then 'Liakim said:

"Your marm an' the babies, are they—are they—"

"Safe and sound, sir."

"Thank the Lord A'mighty!" was the fervent response. "Wheer?"

"Wi' Uncle Judkins," said Dick. And then he laughed from pure excitement. "Land, won't Mollie just be rampagious! She'll raise the roof over our heads. She's kept a-sayin' ev'y day for most a year you was a-comin'."

"What made her?"

"Said her Lady was a-goin' to bring you."

"Her Lady?"

"Yes, sir. Thar was a French sailor giv' her an' Ginnie a picture o' the Virgin Mary an' the Infant Saviour. An' she's took on like a kittiwake ever sense, a-prayin' an' a-scoldin' an' a hustlin' for *you* ef you was alive, or for news of you ef you was dead."

"That's curis! What day's this?"

"The 7th o' November."

"That cert'n'y is curis. An' she's ben a-sayin' her Lady'd do it?"

"She don't let up on it a day, sir."

"Mebbe she did," said 'Liakim, thoughtfully; "mebbe she did. But your marm, Dickie,—you ain't said how she is."

“See’s better, sir,—a heap better ; an’ I bet she’ll know you quick as a wink. She’s—she’s—you know she’s a leetle mite touched up aloft ever sence the time the ‘*Lizabeth Jane*’ come home ’thout you,—just a leetle,” he added hurriedly ; “but fur all that *she’s* stuck to it you was a comin’ home too.”

“I know.”

“You—how’d you know, sir?”

“The babies’ sailor, Dick. Oh, that’s a queer yarn, but I’m beat now—”

“Don’t talk, daddy,” said Dick remorsefully. “I hadn’t ought to let you, an’ I ain’t goin’ to ask you nothin’ more, though I’m most crazy to know how we got you home—whew, that’s a breather, sir !”

“Breather” was a mild name for it. The wind, that seemed about to go down at the turn of the tide, suddenly leaped into the west, and blew such big guns it was hard work to make headway against it. The two men, being drenched through, were soon chilled to the bone, and Dick heaved a long sigh of relief as they reached home and closed the door behind them.

Judkins was asleep in his chair, and as the doctor had said he must never be awakened

suddenly, Dick quietly hurried his father upstairs, where he rubbed him down with salt and whiskey, gave him dry flannels, wrapped him up in a blanket, gave him a dose of hot grog, and saw him comfortably stowed in a bunk and safely off to the Land of Nod ; then he shifted into dry things himself, and sat down on the edge of his berth to pull on dry socks. But if he had belonged to the "Sleeping Beauty's" court he could not have fallen asleep more suddenly nor slept more profoundly than he did, unconscious of the ever-increasing violence of the gale and the news that was hurrying to meet them.

As the tumult waxed louder, it gradually wakened Jonas ; and on seeing that the dinner hour was past, and none of his family had turned up, he wheeled out into the kitchen and began making a cup of coffee, which, with a ship's biscuit, would serve as a "stop-gap."

"Whew !" he muttered ; "this is a rip-snorter, an' no mistake ! Wonder how the brig an' bark come out ? Nasty weather for the Hen-an'-chickens to be a-layin' for your bones. Hark to the guns—no, it's the seas a-bangin' on the Breakwater."

The sound was like a heavy cannonading,

and the view from the shore confirmed the illusion—there would be a flash of curving crest, a crash of smiting waters, and then the spray would go whirling off in clouds and long spirals, just like the smoke of an artillery discharge. And the wind! It ripped the sea into a thousand curdling furrows, and hurtled through the streets, beating and snatching at the houses, until the dishes on the shelves danced, the timbers hummed, and the very atmosphere seemed to reel under its impact.

Through it a man came, fighting his way toward Judkin's cottage—head down, shouldering along as if forcing his passage through a turbulent crowd; arms raised to shield his eyes from the stinging, flying sand, and to keep his breath from being snatched out of his throat. Arrived there, he brought up by clutching the stanchion of the porch, and hanging against the wind, clothes, hair and beard standing horizontal. Then he thundered at the door, and, in a voice that had been trained in the gales of all the world's seas, shouted:

“Judkins, tumble up I say! *Jud-kins!*”

This last was a prolonged roar that brought Jonas wheeling down the passage with a

shouted "Ahoy!" that roused Dick and his father. But the wind blew his voice back in his teeth, so he made a long arm, hauled his visitor inside, and slammed the door.

"Theer!" said he; "now I can hear myself think. What's the news, Mac?"—eagerly. "Hev the brig an' bark took the ground? What? One struck and one held? Which did what?"

"Brig struck."

"Any lost?"

"Three. Six come off on a line, and your Dick jumped in an' pulled another one out."

"*Dick!* How'd he git theer?"

"Took Job Ransom's place."

"Who sent him?"

"He went. Job's got a bone felon—a bad one,—had to hev it cut last night. So when Dick heard the life-boat called he run hard's he could split, shook into Job's boots an' jacket, an' pulled wi' the best o' 'em."

"Sho now! I s'pose you'll be tellin' me next that Mollie an' Ginnie's a-prancin' round in it too. That boy—sho now!—sixteen year old an' pullin' in a gale like this! Sich foolishness!"

But, oh, he was pleased!

“Hello, thar goes my coffee!” as a sudden, sputtering sound was heard, and a cloud of fragrant smoke drifted out to them. “Run, set the pot back, Mac, an’ then we’ll hev a cup together.”

But MacPherson didn’t move; he lifted his hand once or twice toward his lips, then stopped midway in the act, with a look of irresolution strange enough in such a strongly marked face.

“Why don’t you—” began Jonas, when, peering keenly at his comrade, he stopped and cried: “Out wi’ it! Is it—is it the boy? You *said* he pulled wi’ the best—”

“No: thar he is,” said MacPherson, looking much relieved as he caught sight of Dick. Then he backed toward the door, caught hold of the handle and cried out: “The Dune’s up!”

“What?”

“The Crawl’s took her head, an’ she’s a-whirlin’.”

“Well?”—but his lips were stiff.

“An’ your sister—”

“She’s at Miss Truxton’s,” interrupted Jonas, hastily. “Ain’t she, Dick?”

“I left her theer, sir,” began Dick, when MacPherson broke in :

“No, she ain’t. When it come on to blow so hard they couldn’t keep her. She watched her chance, an’ slipped out the house like a—like a ghost, an’ run to the Ridge—land, how she did run!—an’ whipped into thet house, *an’ thar she is now!*”

Then he bolted



XV.

“**L**ORD A'mighty,” groaned Jonas, “hold onto that poor gell! Keep her in th' hollow o' Your mighty hand; fur she's a-laborin' in the trough o' the sea, an' no mistake!”

But all the time he prayed he worked. He wheeled to the cupboard, jerked down his sou'wester, pea-jacket and big boots, which he threw into Dick's arms; then he trundled over to the tool-chest for an ax, a coil of rope, and a crowbar, which he thrust into a pair of eager hands that reached over his shoulder and looked strong enough to use them; and then he fell back, panting and trembling, as he listened to the *thump, thump* of hurrying feet, with a dim sense of having heard Dick say something about his father, and of having seen a figure that looked grey and ghostly in the dim light of the passage way.

Was it 'Liakim's spirit come to take Idella? Was she already lying dead—crushed under the Dune's whirling sands? A shudder ran

through the old sailor's blood ; but his common sense scouted the idea, and he bent his whole will to the happier belief that it was really his brother-in-law ; and that, by one of those marvellous incidents so common among seafaring men, he had escaped death, and been led home at the very moment he was most sorely needed.

He sat there an hour, struggling for hope and patience. Then it was two hours. Then a neighbor brought Mary Ginevra and Ginevra Mary home. On the way from school they had heard some inkling of the news, and he had picked them up half-way to the Ridge, and brought them back in spite of their hard fighting. They pitched into the room, panting, sobbing, crying. They precipitated themselves on old Jonas.

"*Mayn't* we go, uncle? All the folks say the Crawl's a-killin marm, an' theer's a crowd o' men over theer, an' people a-runnin', an'—an'—*we'd* ought to be theer to help."

"No, my birds. Theer's quite enough o' this here fam'ly a-flyin' round permisc'us in this here gale. As fur your little marm, the Lord's got her in tow, an' you can help just as well stayin' here."

"How?" sobbed Mary Ginevra.

But Ginevra Mary knew, and dropped on her knees, raising her earnest little voice and shouting above the din of the storm:

"O my Lady, bend down as fur as you can, an' listen close; for theer's a sight o' noise! Ask Our Lord not to let marm git swallowed up in the Crawl. Tell him to 'member how lonesome He'd a-ben when He was little ef anything had a-happened to *you*. An', O my Lady, ef daddy's alive, keep an eye on him to-day, for this here's a storm-an'-a-half, an' wreckin's awful easy this time o' the year!—She'll do it!" she added, contentedly, as she scrambled to her feet. "I didn't think about it when I was a-hollerin' so. Come 'long, Ginnie; let's get something to eat. I'm hungry, an' uncle—my! ain't you had any dinner, uncle? Here Ginnie Barlow, step round lively; he's 'most starved."

Once in the kitchen, her ambition soared higher.

"It's as easy to cook a lot as a little," she said oracularly, and the smut on her nose lent a sort of professional dignity and weight to her discourse. "Let's make a big, hot dinner fur Dick an'—an' marm," she added,

stoutly; "'cause when they git back they'll be cold, an' tired, an' emptier'n drums,"

And by sundown a dinner was simmering and bubbling in pots and pans that would make a hungry man's mouth water; and down the street, through the dying shrieks of the storm, came tramping not one but five hungry men to enjoy it. They were led by 'Liakim and Dick; the former carrying across his breast, as lightly as if she were a feather-weight, a little woman who had been bleeding profusely from a cut on the head, but who was otherwise absolutely unharmed by her seven hours' imprisonment in the "Portugee's cottage."

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That evening, when the confused emotions of the household had settled into some semblance of order, 'Liakim and Idella told their stories.

The former, when he drifted off in the dory, lived out the horror and the storm somehow; but there came a time when he lost his reckoning from starvation and thirst, and the next he remembered was finding himself on the deck of a whaler bound on a two years' cruise, and too far on her voyage to make any

port. What became of Dan Frost he never knew. The sailors who picked him up said he was alone in the boat when they sighted her.

'Liakim worked his way on the voyage, and was such a valuable hand that the captain offered him a mate's berth to re-ship at St. John's; but he was eager to get home, and travelled day and night to do it, utterly unprepared for the news that met him: "Hull fam'ly up stakes an' went South—Floriday some say. Ain't heerd a word sence they left." He shipped at once on a Florida-bound schooner, and searched the coast fore-and-aft; then on a report that "thar were a Yankee fellow jist gone to Bermuda Light, with a sister an' a whole passel o' chil'ren," he crossed to the islands, only to find strangers. Heart-sick and discouraged, he there shipped on a vessel bound for Rio and Montevideo. On the return cruise they put in at Havana to discharge part of a cargo and ship another. And there they cast anchor alongside a French merchantman. Some intercourse sprang up between the crews, and one morning, when the Americans were growling at the interruption to business

caused by the religious festival then being celebrated, the first officer of the *Rosette de Lyon* came alongside, hailed 'Liakim and invited him to go ashore with him to see the function. He was a cheery, bright fellow, who spoke very good English, and 'Liakim went.

The Cathedral was crowded and the day very close, so after Mass they stopped at a little café to drink orange water and *eau-sucré*. The room was decorated with cheap prints, the one opposite their table being "La belle Jardinière." As they waited the Frenchman said :

"That reminds me of two little American girls I met once—such pretty children, and with a story so touching."

And he proceeded to repeat it. As it progressed 'Liakim's face went red and white alternately, and his heart thumped like a trip-hammer.

"What was their name?" he cried.

"Ah, that I can not recall."

"Try to, try to, for God's sake!"

"I am truly desolated, but it is gone from me absolutely. Stay, though! the names of baptism remain. There was a brother named

Richard—*Deek* they called him,—and the little ones themselves were called for St. Geneviève and the Blessed Mother of God. The mother's name was strange to me; but I remember she had a pretty fancy that the lost father was not dead, only sailing always on a ship bearing that name. When she saw the clouds float by she called them the sails."

Then 'Liakim had astonished René Lenoir by pouring out his story and the hopes and fears that centred on his words.

René had listened with the quick sympathy of his race, and when the Gloucester man finished he took his hand and said:

"To-day is the 15th of August—the Assumption. It is a picture of Our Lady that has been a clue. It is a coincidence. Become her client. No? You'd rather pray direct to God? Well, but that is what I do precisely, only I choose a powerful advocate to present my plea. Very good, then; you pray as seems best to you, but I will begin to-day a novena to Notre Dame des Victoires, and then when the Month of the Rosary is come—October—I will say a pair of beads each day until you find them. And you will—oh, you will, my friend; for she, the Lady

of Victories, is the sailors' patron, their mother and guardian, and her ear is never deaf to the cry of the needy."

A few days later the fever broke out on board and they were quarantined for six weeks, losing several of their crew. They had had it at Montevideo, but got on so well that the men felt proof against it, and exposed themselves recklessly in the city. It was impossible to replace the dead seamen satisfactorily, so the captain determined to work home, short-handed as they were, with the result we know.

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Idella's story was shorter. She had run to the cabin to be near the beach, and was sitting breathless, leaning against the wall toward the Ridge. Suddenly there came a blast, to which the rest were as penny whistles; and then a curious gritting and rustling sound, a crash on the roof, a tearing of wood, and the house seemed to heave and collapse. Then darkness settled on her.

She wakened to a heavy weight on breast and arms, pinioned feet, and a blinding stream of blood. As this lessened she saw the house had been crushed by a sand-slip,

which had poured in, covering everything under heavy drifts; and she was forced up on a heap of beams and wreckage, which held her prisoner, but had preserved her from being crushed. As the sun swung over, the west wind blowing free, a broad ray of light struck across the fair face of the Sand-Pipers' Lady—the only part visible above the sand,—and it had comforted her inexpressibly as she lay there weak and weary. She could not free her hands to staunch the blood, and it had flowed for three or four hours. She grew more and more exhausted, but it seemed that as her strength declined her head grew clearer, and the fever and fret left it. She was conscious of a troubled memory of some great sorrow, but it was vague and it seemed to be over—a peaceful expectancy replacing it.

Then came the hum of many voices, the scraping of shovels, and the sound of axes at work, and then—and then she slipped down on her knees and buried her face on 'Liakim's broad breast, too happy for words.

It was a wonderful day, and Ginevra Mary and Mary Ginevra never tired of talking it over and chorusing the praises of their Lady,

to whose intercession they gave the whole credit of the three rescues. Some believed them, some laughed, some scolded, and some scoffed. But one day, about Christmas time, a carriage drove up and a gentleman got out. He was as square-shouldered as a soldier; his fair brown hair crisped in close curls about his head; his blue eyes, keen and clear, looked from a strong, clean-shaven face; he moved alertly, and, entering, shook hands heartily with Jonas and 'Liakim congratulating them on their separate and mutual good fortune.

"Yes, sir," the former said, "the squall's over an' gone; but theer was a time when we was cert'n'y on beam-ends, all hands."

Then they detailed what he had only heard in general terms. When they finished he said:

"I'd like verry much to see that little girl."

"They've both gone off to bespeak some holly to dress the picture of their Lady with fur Christmas," answered 'Liakim.

"Father Bradford," began Jonas, suddenly, "I ben brought up to think papists was to be pitied an' steered clear of, but theer's queer thing's ben happenin' to me and mine. An'

thet theer Mollie—Ginnie too—is so sot 'bout their Lady, an' thet René" (he called him "Rainy") "was so dead sure, too, that I'd kinder like to talk 'ith you 'bout it."

"Do. I'll be glad to drop in whenever I am down here," said the young priest in the hearty way that made him so popular. "Meantime"—turning to 'Liakim—"why not bring the little girls up to the Christmas Mass at Dover? I am going to have a tree and a Crib for the children, and I think they'll enjoy it."

He was right: they did enjoy it, "every smidjin," to quote themselves; and the deeper meaning of the day they never forgot. Ginevra Mary, immediately on her return, declared her intention of becoming a Catholic "soon's ever she learned 'nough 'bout it for Father Bradford to let her"; and, I am sorry to add, she had three pitched battles with as many schoolmates on the subject of her decision.

Busy as he was with his three churches and his mission work, Father Bradford made time to instruct the twins and Idella carefully, and on the 1st of May received them all into the Church,—the latter bringing a faith

as loving and simple as did her children to lay at the feet of the gentle Christ, whose Virgin Mother had first shrined Him in their hearts.

Jonas and 'Liakim reached their conclusions more deliberately, and many a visit did the young priest pay, and many a long talk did he have with the grave, slow-thinking men, before they announced they were ready to sign articles and ship on the Bark of Peter.

Dick has not followed yet, but he and Hendershott have had several conversations on the subject, and both have concluded that as there can be only one real Captain, His rules, whatever they are, must be the right ones to navigate by. And the diver says: "'s fur as I kin make out, Barlow and Judkins hev hold o' the tow-rope, an' are hitched to the right tender."



BODGER;

OR, HOW IT HAPPENED.

BODGER;

Or, How It Happened.

I.

WAL, ef this don't beat all the rains ever *I* see!" And Captain Ephraim Saltonstall, of the schooner *Lively Polly*, bent his head, gave a tug to his sou'wester, and literally shouldered his way through wind and weather toward the wharf, where the *Lively*—as she was called in ordinary conversation—was bobbing and straining at her moorings.

As he reached the last warehouse, an unusually fierce gust tore around the corner, and sent him staggering into its doorway for shelter. Here he stumbled over something, from which issued a low wail.

"Bless my stars!" said he, "wot's this here?" And he bent to see, when a tiny fist was reached from the thin old shawl that

covered it, and he saw, or rather *felt*,—it was a child.

“By gum !” said he, “it’s a live child ; an’ it’s going to be a dead un soon, ef somethin’ ain’t done, and done quick. Whar’s the watchman ? Turned in. Don’t blame him neether. Wisht some o’ them there infant asylums was handy that the Romanists plant round. But they ain’t. And the *Lively’s* got to trip anchor and off down the Bay at day-break. What’ll I do with the critter, anyway ? Take it up and kerry it aboard ? Wal, that’s easy enuf, but arter that ? Sho now ! Wisht I hadn’t a-come this way !—wisht I didn’t mind playing priest an’ levite, an’ passin’ by t’other side. Ork’ard bein’ a Samaritan to a infant !”

Here the bundle stirred again and moaned.

“Wal, here goes ! Come along, young un. I ain’t never sheered off f’um a signal of distress yet, and I ain’t a-goin’ to begin wi’ a cock-boat like you.”

And he lifted the little one “ork’ardly” enough, opened his pea-jacket, wrapped it warm, and strode off to the *Lively* with a quick step.

By the light of the oil lamp in his cabin he

examined his find with some curiosity, and saw an undersized child about two years old, wizened and pinched, and sleeping so heavily and breathing so unnaturally that he muttered: "Drugged and turned out to die !"

It was drenched through, but he had no clothes to replace its rags ; so, forcing some rum and water between its blue lips, he wrapped it up in a thick blanket, put his jacket under its head, and laid it on his sea-chest. Then he hurried into his hammock, and, although greatly exercised about the matter, fell asleep at once, and only wakened when the cabin-boy pounded on the door, with the brief announcement, "Day-break, sir !"

He turned out, hurried into pilot coat and boots, and in a few minutes was thundering his orders from the little deck ; and it was not until the *Lively* was slipping down the Bay, with Minot's red eye glaring on the starboard beam, that he remembered his find, and wondered what it was up to.

He plunged below, ducked his tall head, and went into the cabin. There it was, sitting up among the folds of the blanket, dry and warm, with tangled hair rampantly erect, and

keen bright eyes, that looked half frightened and half sly as they caught a glimpse of him.

“Wal, youngster,” he said, cheerily, “how-de-do? Hungry?” But it made no answer, and as he drew near, it crouched aside, and put up its hand as if to ward off a blow.

“Why, I ain’t a-goin’ to hurt ye, ye little goose! On’y want to get ye somethin’ to eat. Come along!” And, lifting it up, he smoothed its hair with one horny hand, looked dubiously at his tin basin, and then he shook his head.

“Guess ye had ’nuff washin’ last night to last a considerable time.” And he tramped into the little “saloon,” where the mate was already bolting his breakfast, and drinking cup after cup of black coffee.

The fellow looked up, and was so amazed at what he saw—“the skipper wi’ a young un in his arms”—that he stopped short, with his mouth wide open and his cup in the air:

“Whar’d that come from?” he gobbled at last.

“Rid up on th’ anchor, p’raps,” said the Captain, and, with a solemn wink, he set the child on his knee and gave it “share and share alike” of his own meal, except the

coffee, which he replaced by condensed milk, remembering vaguely to have heard somewhere that children and milk make a good combination.

When they were through, he began :

“Now, youngster, wot’s your name? Tom?”

A shake of the small head was the answer.

“Ain’t? Is it Bill? Jack? Jim?”

A series of shakes.

“’Ot a boy ’tall,” it said, finally

“My glory! ye ain’t a gal, be ye?”

An emphatic nod proved it beyond doubt.

“Wal, I’m jiggered!” he gasped; “this *doos* complercate matters!”

“Name’s Bodger,” she went on.

“Bodger? What’s that?”

“Bodger, an’ I gits hitted.” And a vigorous action of her arm showed what *that* meant, at least.

Captain Ephraim looked at her in dense astonishment, but all he said was: “Well, my little maid, ye must jes stay here a while, tell I git back.”

But she clung to his collar, and buried her face so close in his jacket, that he could not get free without hurting her. So with a

patient, "I vum!" he went on deck, with the child hanging like a monkey to his jacket.

"See here, you fellows," he called as he stepped from the companion way; "this here young un's come aboard. She's a gal-child, an' has had ha'sh treatment. Look at that an' that"—and he pointed to a long, blue weal across her face, and a livid bruise on her arm,—"an' I want ye all to be good to her tell I git back to port, an' put her som'eres where she'll be keered for decent. Now hawl away thar, and git that mainsail shook out; for the breeze is a-comin' over thar, an' no mistake.

"Here you are, youngster!" And he swung her down on a coil of rope, gave a neat turn with one end of it, fastening her securely to the grating, and then fell to with a will to help his men.

.
Some six months after, on a bright May night, the *Lively* came dancing home. "The Capen's maid," as the waif came to be called, was the pet of all hands, and was fairly good as children go; but she tyrannized over Captain Ephraim to a degree marvellous to

behold, for he loved her as well as if she had been his own.

On this night he stood leaning on the rail looking at, but not seeing, Minot's eye that beamed a welcome, and Nixie's Mate that lay like a shadow to the right.

James O'Neil, one of his best seamen, came up to him:

"Capen, ef I might make so free, what ye goin' to do wi' the maid when you git ashore?"

"Dunno," said Ephraim, setting his hair all on end, as he rubbed it worriedly; "dunno; ain't got any relations, and I've got so fond of the little critter I don't want to put her inter the poor'us or a home, an' I've pretty near made up my mind to take her off again on the *Lively*."

Then he gave his hair another rub—the wrong way, of course.

"It's a hard life for a gal-child," said O'Neil, suggestively.

"Yes, I know that," responded Ephraim; "but I don't see no—"

"Wal, Capen, I ast you," said O'Neil, as he paused, "'cause my wife ain't got ne'er a chick nor child, an' I think she'd be glad of the comp'ny. I *know* she'd take good keer

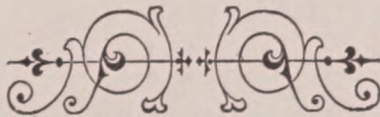
of her. Jes look at my shirts an' socks, an' my hossif,"* he added, with pardonable pride.

"Wal, now, that's a reel good idee, O'Neil, an' I'll think it over. An' it was reel clever of ye to think of it, too."

"Oh, sho!" said O'Neil, "that's all right. Ye see, I'm fond o' the maid too, and ye ain't such a bad skipper yerself."

Which, coming from two Yankee sailors, meant civilities indeed.

* "Housewife"—the sewing-case sailors take with them to sea. It is filled with needles, thread, buttons, tapes, etc.



II.

O'NEIL was an American ; but, several years before Captain Ephraim picked up "his maid," he had married a pretty Irish girl just out from the old country, and had set up a modest housekeeping in two rooms on the South water-front. These were as neat as soap and water could make them ; and as Mollie's clear-starching and laundering were famous, she managed during the cruises of the *Lively* to add many little comforts to their furnishing — turkey-red curtains for winter, muslin ones for summer, some pots of geraniums, a hardy rose or two, and lately a bird.

"Neat as a ship," was Captain Ephraim's comment, as he stood in the doorway, the little one clinging to him as usual ; "and the young ooman as fresh as paint," as Mollie came forward, her pretty blue eyes giving a welcome to her husband, and her rosy cheeks blushing a shade pinker before the stranger.

“Well, my girl,” said O’Neil, kissing her, with a hearty pride in her comeliness ; “here’s the young un I told ye about.”

“Ye’re kindly welcome, sir,” she said to the Captain ; “an’ I’ll be glad indade to take the child.”

“Now, that’s reel clever !” he answered ; “fur I ain’t never seen a place that I’d ruther leave a young un in ; an’ I think, mum, you’re the right sort to do well by a orphan.”

After a little more talk the two men left ; but not without a sore struggle on the part of the maid, who clung to the Captain, and long after he was gone cried in a subdued, unchildlike fashion, that made Mollie’s heart ache.

Finding words were of no use, she did the best thing she could have thought of — picked the child up in her arms, and cuddled her close, rocking her back and forth, and kissing and petting her in a way that made Bodger hold her breath in surprise.

The *Lively’s* trip was a flying one, and before the next night she had fluttered out like a little white moth into the far blue. But the Captain left ample provision for the child ; and Mollie’s days were busier than

ever, getting her fitted out, and yet trying not to let her own work suffer.

As soon as the first decent suit was finished, she took her around to Father Byrne, and told him as much of the story as she could, while Bodger watched the pigeons from the other end of the room. In conclusion she added :

“Indade, sir, I’m afeared she ain’t baptized at all at all. She has no more idea of God an’ His Holy Mother—blessed be their names!—than a haythen Pi-ute, as O’Neil says ; an’ she ain’t even got a Christian name, as near as I can sense it ; so I thought she’d better have a conditional baptism, any way.”

“You are quite right, Mrs.—”

“O’Neil,” she said, with a courtesy.

“Mrs. O’Neil. What name have you thought of for her ?”

“Well, sir, seein’ as it’s the month o’ May, I thought p’raps it ud be good to call her after the Blessed Virgin herself.”

“That’s a pious thought, and the name will bring a blessing to the child.”

And it seemed to ; for a sunnier, sturdier youngster than the maid grew to be, was not found on the water-front.

She loved Mollie and was fond of O'Neil : but her "daddy," as she called Captain Ephraim, she simply adored. And as for him, he soon fell into the habit of spending all his spare time in the little front-room, where, on winter evenings, the sausage sizzled on the stove and the kettle "puttered" on the hob ; and in summer the salt wind freshened the heat, and the flowers nodded in their pots ; and "little Mary," "me darlint," or "my maid" (as she was variously called), hung about him as he told his sea-yarns, or listened while O'Neil and his Mollie chatted of the days to come, when they could have a little home of their own somewhere, and the sailor could turn farmer.

At this last the Captain would smile ; for he knew that when the sea once gets its grip on a man, it never looses it until his soul goes out with the ebb-tide* in some coast-village, or his bones go down into its silent keeping.

These visits were high holidays for the maid ; but when the two men were at sea she was as busy as a bee in a tar-barrel, learning all Mollie could teach her about the house,

* It is a curious fact that those who die in coast-villages, especially sailors, die as the tide is going out.

sewing, going to school, and learning her Catechism with Father Byrne, who fancied the quaint child, and watched her development with interest.

For a long time the name by which she always called herself—"Bodger"—remained a puzzle, but Mollie fancied she got a clue to it about a year after the maid came to her. She was ironing one day in great haste, and accidentally touched the hot metal.

"Ah, bother!" she cried.

The little girl was on the floor, playing with some building-blocks; but at this she stopped, cast a frightened look around her, then scrambled to her feet, and went to Mollie's side.

"'Ot you want?"

"Nothin', me darlint," said Mollie.

"You say 'Bodger'!"

"I burnt me hand an' said, 'Bother!'"

"'Es," said the maid, "Bodger. 'At's me."

Mollie's quick Celtic wit leaped to a conclusion. She dropped on her knees by the child.

"Glory to God!" she said, "were you called that, me dear?"

The maid nodded.

“An’ hadn’t ye any other name ?”

This time she shook her head.

And Mollie thought: “Ah ! mustn’t that be a black, wicked heart that ud call a child nothin’ but a bother ?”

So saying she put her arms round the maid, and kissed her silently.

As Bodger grew older, and began to understand her religion, she developed an ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin, of and to whom she often spoke as “Me dear.”

Mollie reproved her at first, for it seemed hardly reverent; but the little girl said, simply :

“You call me that ’cause you love me ; I love *her*, an’ so I call her it too. But av ye like, I’ll call her ‘My Lady,’ like ye called the pretty Queen in the ould country.”

“Not the Queen, darlint, but me Lady Clontarf at Castle Darragh.”

“Well, her, then. Wasn’t she the biggest lady of ’em all, an’ the prettiest, an’ the swatest ?”—for the maid had a touch of the brogue from association.

“Indade she was,” said Mollie ; “an’ it’s meself should know.”

“Then,” said Bodger, “it’s a good name ;

for *my* Lady's the greatest an' prettiest an' the swatest of all that ever lived."

And when Mollie, in some anxiety, told Father Byrne, he said :

"Let her call Our Lady so if she wishes. There can never be any harm in the natural expressions of love used by an innocent child." Then he asked for O'Neil and the Captain, in the latter of whom he was much interested ; for the skipper, although "no professor of religion," had a deep, natural piety, and was a singularly honest, straightforward nature.



III.

THE first time Father Byrne met the Captain, he asked him several questions, and the characteristic answers of the skipper made an impression.

“No, I don’t b’long to any church ’zactly, but o’ course I hev some chart-lines laid down,” he said. “Thar was a ole chap—Taylor, I think they called him—that was al’ays pokin’ round the docks, an’ in an’ out the shippin’. Reel nice ole man, too, vener’ble and soft-spoken; an’ oncet he said to me: ‘Young man, you are with a bad set o’ fellows. Get out of it. You wouldn’t want, ef you was in the tropics, to go herdin’ around with a lot o’ hungry sharks.’ An’ I says: ‘Not much I wouldn’t.’ An’ a cold chill went down my back; fer I’d seen one o’ my shipmates chewed and mauled in the Bay of Rio Janary jest that a-way. An’ then he says: ‘These here fellows ull do ashore fur you what the sharks ud do afloat, on’y one would

destroy your body, an' t'others your soul.' Then says he: 'Respec' God and women; be honest to your neighbors; an' if you want to be ha'sh, try it on your own faults, an' you'll git through.' "

"That's good, sound Catholic doctrine," smiled Father Byrne, "as far as it goes; but why not come farther? Suppose a great ship-owner sent you out in a fine ship, which he promised to give you for your own, if you went on a certain cruise, and followed certain instructions, that were simple and sensible. What would you do?"

"*Do it!*" said Captain Ephraim. "Fool ef I didn't!"

"Well," continued Father Byrne, "the great Lord of Heaven has lent you your soul; you are sent out on the sea of life; this soul is more noble and is finer than any vessel that ever slipped off the stocks, and it will be yours for a happy eternity if you follow out the simple and sensible plan laid down in the Gospels."

"Wal, now," said the Captain, "that does sound reasonable. But it 'pears to me the d'rections *ain't* so simple an' easy."

"Come into the Catholic Church and you'll

think differently. The line between right and wrong is as clean-drawn as the equator."

But the old sailor shook his head.

"I dunno," he said ; "I dunno. O'Neil's the best sailor I've got, an' Mollie's a good gal ; an' ef the maid grows like her through bein' a Romanist, why, I'll be glad of it. But fur me—" And he shook his head again. "Howsomdever, passon," he added, "I like to hear ye talk, an' I like a good, square stand-up and knock-down argyment ; so, ef it's agreeable to you, we'll go it again when the *Lively* gits back."

And they did many times ; but there was always a lurking doubt somewhere in the old soilor's brain, and he came and went as before.

Meantime, with little Bodger everything dated from those comings and goings of her "daddy," and the days between were counted carefully on a string of beans Mollie gave her. Her joy may, then, be imagined when one Christmas Eve, in the midst of a whirling snowstorm, and while the beans had two weeks still to run, in walked the Captain, looking like a polar bear in the eddy of flakes that clung to him and chased after him as he shut the door.

When the excitement had subsided a little, he said to Mollie :

“ O’Neil’s got the mid-watch, and can’t get off till four o’clock ; but he says he’ll meet ye at the church, at the Mass.”

Mollie’s pretty face, which had fallen when he began, cleared up with such a brilliant, happy smile that the Captain remarked :

“ Ye cert’nly do set an amazin’ store by that theer Mass o’ yourn !”

“ We do that !” said Mollie ; “ an’ small wonder, too, whin it’s the mim’ry of Calvary an’ the reminder of the Real Presence.”

Then she turned to the maid.

“ Come, me darlint, ye must lay down and sleep a while, so ye can go rested.”

“ Who’s goin’ with ye ?” asked the Captain, suddenly.

“ Just the two av us,” said Mollie ; adding, shyly, “ unless ye’d go with us yerself.”

“ O my daddy ! yes, do come !” cried Bodger, flying to him and throwing her arms around his neck. “ Do, do !” And every time she said it she kissed him. “ It’s the gladdest day o’ the year, an’ av ye come it’ll be some like the Wise Men ; fur ye’ve come so far—on’y the *Lively* ain’t a camel,” she

added, somewhat sadly. "But that don't matter; it was the comin' that was the good part, not the way they come."

Wise Bodger!

Captain Ephraim thought a minute, then :

"Yes, my maid"; adding in a half-apologetic tone to Mollie, "it ain't safe fur you two gals to go alone."

But when he reached the great church, and saw the vast crowds hurrying in, saw them kneeling with absorbed devotion, saw the altar massed with flowers and shining like a moonrise; when he saw the Bethlehem with its group of figures, and heard the exultant, glorious music, he realized that no Catholic is ever alone in his religion, and he was amazed at the splendor and magnificence about him.

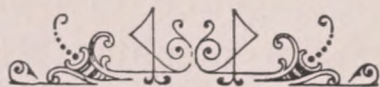
A dim memory of Ephraim and his idols swept over him, and he shook his head uneasily. But when Father Byrne turned from the altar, and in a few clear sentences recalled the significance of Christmas, and dwelt on its tender meaning, the Captain's face cleared. The burden of the refrain was, "And a little child shall lead them"; and just as the priest uttered the words the first

time, the maid, in sheer contentment, slipped her little paw into her daddy's horny hand.

It gave Captain Ephraim a thrill of strange emotion, and seemed like a tangible summons to receive the baptism Father Byrne had several times urged upon him ; but the feeling passed as he watched the scene about him, and he had almost forgotten it, when suddenly across the silence of the church smote the clash of silvery bells, and every figure swayed forward, bowing, adoring.

A strange awe fell on him, but he saw nothing except something round, which Father Byrne held high above his head. Then the Captain knelt too ; for 'it was more ship-shape to do it,' he thought, 'ef all the others was a-doin' of it.'

But even after this when the *Lively* sailed it was only a good heathen that paced her decks as skipper.



IV.

THE *Lively* had been out on a long cruise, and one that paid so well that Captain Ephraim chuckled as he chinked his bag of dollars, and thought how near the little home was of which O'Neil and his Mollie dreamed.

"I'll buy it, by gum ! An' the maid an' Mollie shell keep house, an' me an' O'Neil ull have a reel stylish time of it—a-sailin' in our *Lively* here when time an' tide an' bizness sarve, an' goin' off to the country to take our ease when they don't. I'll git it round about Hullway, so's the two gals kin see the top-sails arisin', and achorage clus to hum ull be easy. Thet thar O'Neil now, he's a proper kind of a chap. Guess I'll take him out ez mate nex' time, fur ef *I* buys the house *he* kin put his savin's into a share in the *Lively*."

He was so full of his plan that he was eager to get ashore ; but, as the little craft slipped along under the green hills of his har-

bor, a round-robin was presented to him to the effect :

‘Bein’ as how *he* hadn’t got no kith nor kin, an’ all of *them* a-bein’ fambly men—’cept the cabin-boy, an’ his name was put in to make the robin round—would he ’low all hands to go ashore till midnight, when any watch he’d name ud come back prompt, so help ’em davy?’

“Sho now!” thought the Captain; “sho now! The maid ain’t mine except by rights o’ salvage, but I’m disappointed, that’s a fac’. Howsomdever, here goes till midnight.”

And he told them that if the two senior men (for in spite of that fine-sounding phrase “any watch he’d name,” there were only four men on the *Lively* beside the Captain and the cabin-boy) *would* be back promptly at midnight, they might go. Thereupon, with throats of brass and lungs of leather, they hurrahed “three-times-three,” and shortly after the anchor was dropped Captain Ephraim was pacing the deck—for the cargo was valuable—attentively watched by the cabin-boy, whose one ambition in life was to grow up to a skipper.

O’Neil hurried home; and his Mollie,

“Lookin’ as fresh as the morn, darlint,”
met him, with the maid at her apron-string.

“Glory to God ye’re home, my man!”
she said. “An’ it’s meself as hopes to have
a bit of yer soci’ty for a few weeks; ye’re that
agreeable, ye see,” she added, with a laugh.

But the maid lifted up her little pipe.

“My daddy—where is he?”

“He sent ye his love, an’ he’ll be here
bright an’ early the morn,” said O’Neil.

But the maid thought the morning was too
far off, and her daddy so very unkind that
her heart swelled. Wasn’t she dressed in
her best, and hadn’t she almost forgot to say
her beads properly at her May devotions for
fear she would not be home in time to catch
the first glimpse of him as he came down the
street? And now—now he wasn’t coming at
all!

She ran back as fast as her feet could
paddle, to the church—for, although almost
eight o’clock, its doors were still open—and
crept to the railing before the altar of Our
Blessed Lady, where she sat down for a good
cry. After sobbing out the first of her grief,
she looked up to the sweet countenance
above her, and whispered :

“Wasn’t it mean of him, my Lady, not to come home to his maid?”

But the taper flickering in the wind that stirred the flowers on the altar lent a mysterious smile to the face; and the maid, repenting her of blaming her daddy, said:

“But maybe it wasn’t his fault. Was it, my Dear?”

The flickering light lent a still sweeter smile to the carved mouth, and the child went on:

“So I’ll just say me prayers, and then go—go—”

Into her little head popped an idea, and who shall say it was a chance thought?

“My Lady,” she said, quite loud, her cheeks red with excitement and her eyes shining, “I’ll go to him. I know the way as well as well. It’s dark and scary down on the wharfs, but I don’t mind, if you’ll take care of me.”

And the wind rustled through the flowers once more, and out of the garland laid across the statue’s outstretched hands fell a piece of May-flower.

“I’ll take that, my Dear,” she said. “It’s one of your own flowers, an’ I’m thinkin’

maybe it's a mark you're willin' I should go."

And down the street she trotted to where a street-car stood, the conductor of which was a great friend of hers.

"Do you want a ride, my maid?" he asked.

"Please, Mr. White, I do," she said; "but I ain't got any money."

"Well, I calculate your weight won't break down the car, nor one free ride won't bust the Comp'ny," he answered, agreeably. "Hop on!"

And they had a pleasant ride through the crowded streets, and to the far-distant wharf, off which lay anchored the *Lively*.

Here the maid stepped down with a polite "Thank you." But Mr. White said:

"Can't leave you here, young un, at this hour, by yourself."

"I'm goin' to meet my daddy."

"Sure?" he asked, dubiously.

"Yes, sir," and she nodded her head till he was quite dizzy watching it.

"Well," he said, "if it's all right, it *is* all right. But reely now, my maid, I wouldn't advise ye to do that Chinese mandarin business with your head too often, for it might come off some day."

At which witty remark they both laughed ; and the maid skipped down the wharf, and was soon lost in the shadows.

“Now,” she said, “I’ll get a boat, and off I’ll go. And won’t my daddy be surprised when he sees me a-climbin’ up the—”

Here a big voice said : “Clear out, little gal ! We don’t want no children a-fallin’ off these here wharfs at this time o’night.”

Her heart sank to her boots. It was a great, big, fierce policeman.

“Please, sir,” she said, meekly, “I’m here to see my daddy.”

“Yer daddy ? What is he ? A stevedore ?”

“He’s skipper o’ the *Lively*, sir. Don’t you see her off yonder ?” And she pointed to where the pretty schooner lay in the light of the young moon.

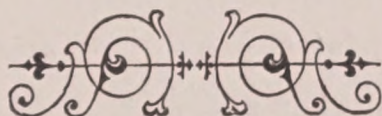
“Oh ! is he ?” said the big policeman. “Is he coming ashore soon ?”

“I don’t know,” she faltered ; for, somehow, he did not look like a man who would approve of her plan.

“Well,” said he, still gruffly, but kindly, “you jest run home an’ wait for him. He wouldn’t be too pleased to find ye round sich a place as this, little gal.”

But her hardy spirit rose, and as he turned away she whisked into the shadow of a post, drew her gown close about her, and bided her time.

It was so much longer, however, than she bargained for, and the watchman patrolled so steadily up and down, that she fell into a sound sleep.



V.

BODGER was awakened out of her sleep by hearing voices very close to her, and this is what they said :

“The fool has played into our hands. He’s sent his crew ashore, and nobody’s aboard except him and the cabin-boy. The men ain’t coming back till midnight, and Bill Gryce won’t be worth much when he does come; for I give it to him hot and I give it to him strong.” And he made a motion of putting a glass to his lips.

The chill night air, the surprise of her surroundings, the sudden waking, and the fright might well have excused an older person for making an outcry; but after the first start the brave child crossed herself, and sent up a prayer to her Lady, listening eagerly to what followed. And how awful it was!

“So you meet me here in an hour’s time, and we’ll get off. It’ll be an easy matter to kill him, chuck him overboard, ransack the

Lively, and get off before the lubbers find out anything's wrong." And then a laugh followed.

The poor little maid could scarcely draw her breath, and trembled so she was afraid they would hear her teeth chatter. But she held on tight to her knees, and prayed as she had never prayed before in her life.

As the two men moved away one of them said: "Where's the boat?"

"Tied to the pile, just here"—rapping with his heel the very board on which the child crouched.

Then they were gone, and Bodger wrung her small hands.

"Oh! I know they mean my daddy! What shall I do, what *shall* I do? O my Lady! tell me what I must do to help him. He saved my life, you know, my Dear, and I ought to save his!"

Like an inspiration came the thought of the boat:

"Thank ye my Lady!" she said; "I can row."

And she could row fairly well—what child brought up on the river-front can not?—but how was she to get at it?

She crawled cautiously along the edge of the wharf, feeling every inch of space, and at last she touched a small line, slip-knotted over the plank. She pulled on it slowly and carefully, and soon a lap-streak's nose bobbed against the pile. She could hardly see it, for the moon was gone, the sky was thickening to seaward, and the stars were wide apart and dim. Added to this was the shifting, uncertain light of the water.

Then came the question how she was to get into the boat; for it lay a full six feet below the level of the wharf. But she had unlimited faith, and her need was urgent. She turned her white, resolute little face up skyward:

"Dear God, look out for me now; and, my Lady, please help me; for I'm goin' to jump, and I *think* I'm goin' to fall into the water. If I do, I'll have some work gettin' into the boat; but I'm goin' to hold tight to the painter, and I know you'll do the rest for me."

And the plucky little creature did jump, but, as God and Our Lady willed, she fell inside the boat, on a pile of sacking, which was doubtless meant for the plunder. She felt about for the oars, and was soon drifting

slowly down on the *Lively* ; for, although the boat was heavy, she had the tide with her.

Captain Ephraim had spent the evening up and down, as he expressed it, conscious of uneasiness, but not knowing what made him so. This time was one of his "down spells," and he sat in his cabin, surveying a doll, a bright red sash, a pea-green silk handkerchief, and a pair of shoes he had brought his maid.

A slow smile was lingering on his face, when suddenly thump, thump!—on the water-line came a succession of blows.

"Land!" said the startled sailor. "I ain't give e'er a job o' caulkin' to the mermaids, as I kin remember ; but ef them ain't a caulker's hammers, or somethin' else" (Yankee caution), "why, I don't know!"

And he ran up the companion ladder, and to the side where the sound was ; for a sailor can locate a sound as quick as a cat.

"O daddy!" he heard a thin, piping wail ; "drop over a rope or somethin'; it's me, your maid." And then the thumping recommenced.

"Daddy" lifted his cap (his rising hair had nearly done it for him). "Good Lord!" he

said, "ye ain't gone an' took my maid, hev ye?"

But the voice called again :

"Hurry, daddy ! I'm so cold and"—here it broke—"so skee-e-e-ered !"

"Never heern o' ghosts bein' skeered," he said. "They mos'ly spend their time littin' other people tend to that."

And he dropped the small rope-ladder over the side, and scrambled down in time to pick up a bunch that was a very limp maid indeed.

When, amid sobs and gasps, she told her story he could not believe it ; but, as she insisted so upon its truth, he began to feel she was right. Besides, there was the boat, and what was more important, a red cap, such as Lascars wear ; and the Captain recognized it as belonging to a man who had helped ship some of his cargo at New York, and whom he had rated soundly for cutting into a bale of silk, dismissing him on the spot, with a threat of the police.

But he paid more attention to his maid than anything else ; and his keen eyes were very wet when he saw her poor bruised, blistered hands, and listened to the details of her adventure.

As she told him of her innocent and fervent prayers, of her reliance on the Holy Ones, his head dropped lower, and he folded his hands unconsciously, while through his mind ran, like a refrain : “And a little child shall lead them.”

Again and again it came, and he passed in review the whole train of events:—how eight years ago he had picked up the deserted child ; how she had led him to love, and given him a home-feeling ; how she had taken him to church that Christmas morning—a church where a nameless awe had overcome him, as the bells rang, and the priest held aloft what to the eyes seemed a simple wafer of bread, but before which the Heavens themselves were bowed ; how the priest told of the Child that came to lead captive death and sin and woe ; and how earnestly Baptism had been urged upon him.

Then he said : “My maid, we’ll go to-morrow to that there church, and ef God A’mighty an’ His Lady Mother will take me, I’m theirn till the end o’ my life—an’ arter-ward too, I hope.”

And the maid answered : “Yes, daddy,” and fell asleep on his shoulder.

At daybreak great was Mollie's relief to see the skipper and Bodger coming in. The poor woman had cried her pretty, grey eyes almost out ; and O'Neil was still in the streets, hunting at every police station for the lost child.

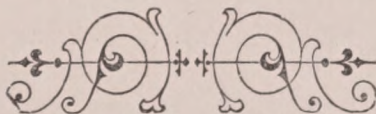
But Mollie's joyful outcries were subdued by the look of solemn dignity on the skipper's weather-beaten face, and the strange light that shone in his eyes ; and when, after early Mass, he rose and went forward to the front to receive Baptism, with the maid's hand locked in his, and his grey hair stirring in the wind of Our Lady's May morning, she leaned back, and, like the warm-hearted little woman she was, cried again heartily.

He took the name of Thomas, "fur *he* was a doubter, same ez me," he said ; "an' the Lord showed him special mercy, same ez me agin ; an' them's the on'y two pints of resemblance there'll ever be 'twixt me an' a saint, I'm afeared."

God, who marks a sparrow's fall, marked Captain Ephraim's deed of charity, and in the fulness of His own time gave him the great reward of faith.

And that's how it happened.

And the would-be murderers and robbers ? Punishment fell swiftly upon them. When they returned and found the boat gone, each accused the others of carelessness ; a quarrel sprang up, knives were drawn, and in a few minutes the Lascar was drifting seaward, to fatten the gulls and fishes, with two ghastly holes in his breast and throat. Of the two that struck the blows, one was killed in a drunken brawl that same year, after a melancholy career of crime ; and the other is still serving a life-term in the penitentiary.







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